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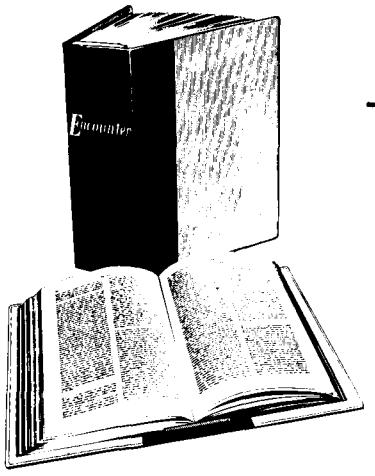


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MARCH 1983
VOL. LX No. 3
ISSN 0013-7073

# Encounter

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*Per copy: UK £1.30: USA & Canada $3.25. Back numbers £2.00 ($5.00). Postage/packing: 40p ($1.00).*
*Annual subscriptions: UK £15.75: USA & Canada $36.50 surface, $46.00 by air: Elsewhere £17.00.*
*Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194).*
*US Mailing Agent: Expediters of the Printed Word Ltd., 527 Madison Avenue, Suite 1217, New York 10022.*
*Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Binder for six copies £4.50 ($9.60).*
*Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp) or International Reply Coupons.*

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# *Russell Hoban*

# *Pilgermann*

PILGERMANN HERE. I call myself Pilgermann, it's a convenience. What my name was when I was walking around in the shape of a man I don't know, I simply can't remember. What I am now is waves and particles, I don't need to walk around, I just go. When I want to appear I turn up as an owl. When I see myself in my mind I see myself flying silently across the face of a full moon that is wreathed in luminous clouds; heath and swamp and wood below me, silvered rooftops, sleeping chimneys glide. Pilgermann the owl. The owl has always been big in my mind. Once as a boy I was in a ruin of some kind, old fire-blackened stones and burnt and rotted timbers. Twilight it was, the dying day shivering a little and huddling itself up in its cloak. Suddenly there came flying towards me with a mouse dangling from its beak an owl, what is called a veiled owl, with a limp mouse dangling from its cryptic heart-shaped face. "Hear, O Israel!" I cried: "the Lord our God, the Lord is One!"

Ah! the flickering in the darkness, the passage of what is called time!

I don't know what I am now. A whispering out of the dust. Dried blood on a sword and the sword has crumbled into rust and the wind has blown the rust away but still I am, still I am of the world, still I have something to say, how could it be otherwise, nothing comes to an end, the action never stops, it only changes, the ringing of the steel is sung in the stillness of the stone.

I speak from where I am; I speak from between the pieces; I speak from where Abram heard the voice of God:

> *And it came to pass, that,*
> *when the sun went down, and*
> *there was thick darkness,*
> *behold a smoking furnace,*
> *and a flaming torch that*
> *passed between these pieces.*
> *In the day the LORD made*
> *a covenant with Abram. . . .*

A covenant with God is made from between the pieces of oneself; it's the only place where a covenant can happen, no covenant is possible until one has divided the heifer, the she-goat, the ram of oneself. The turtle-dove and the young pigeon being the heart and soul one of course does not divide them. When Abram sacrificed the animals of himself as instructed by God a deep sleep fell upon him, and the dread and the great darkness from which God spoke. Then came the thick darkness after the sun went down, and in that darkness were the smoking furnace and the flaming torch that passed between the pieces. So here already was shown the main theme of the people of Abraham: the furnace and the torch; the consuming fire and the onward flame.

If you measure with what is called time it's a long way from here back to Abram's pieces. But still there is the division of the animals of us, still the thick darkness, the smoking furnace, the flaming torch. And still there are covenants to be made between the pieces, between one fire and another. I am only the waves and particles of such as I was but I have a covenant with the Lord, the terms of it are simple: everything is required of me, for ever.

SO. FROM WHEREVER AND FROM WHATEVER I am now in what is called the present moment my being goes back to the year 1096 in the Christian calendar which was the year 4856



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in the Jewish calendar. My being goes back to a particular morning in that year, the morning of the thirty-first of July which was for Jews the Ninth of Av, Tisha b'Av, the morning of that day when Jews who have already been fasting since the evening before sit on low stools or on the floor of the synagogue and mourn the destruction of the First and Second Temples; they mourn other disasters as well, among them that day when the twelve spies returned from Canaan and Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes because the children of Israel listened only to the evil report and turned aside from the land of milk and honey.

I no longer have a mouth with which to smile wryly but I think that the waves and particles of me must be arranged in something like a wry smile as I remember that land of milk and honey from which I did not turn aside on the Eve of the Ninth of Av, that land of milk and honey from which I was returning in the freshness of the summer dawn.

I was on my way home from the house of the tax-collector. I say tax-collector, it sounds right, but in fact I'm not certain what he was; he may well have been, may still be, something else. I know that he was an official of some kind, something of authority, a man of exactions, of that certain sort of neck, not actually fat, that in a more modern time bulges over the stiff uniform collar. The smell of such a man's freshly shaven face is oppressive across the centuries. It is a law of nature that such a man will have a wife of exquisite gentility and superb figure. A woman of regal buttocks and nervous, equine grace. A face of mercy and sweet goodness. That this man should have the management of such a woman is absolutely scientific in its manifestation of that asymmetry without which there would be no motion in the universe. Yes, such a coupling imparts spin to the cosmos, it creates action, it utterly negates stasis.

Such a man as that Herr Steuerjäger or Gerichtsvollzieher or whatever, such a man as that cannot live without a Jew to be other than. If there were no Jews he would invent them, he would dress up as a Jew and flog himself. He is like that act one sees in cabaret in which a woman is half-costumed as a gorilla with whom she dances and to whose advances she ultimately yields. What was it that he did, did he impose a candle tax on Jews because they were reading too much? Or was it that he required all circumcision knives to be inspected by his brother-in-law the butchery inspector, with an exorbitant fee to be paid for the stamp of approval? Or was it simply that he started the tale that Jews kept little live toads in their phylacteries for sorcery? It doesn't matter, if it wasn't one thing it was another.

Myself, I think I may have been a tailor or a surgeon or something of that sort. Whatever I was, my services had so far never been required by that man or his household; least of all that service I longed to render upon the body of that incomparable and to me unapproachable woman. Her name is Sophia: Wisdom. There's allegory for you, the vision of naked Wisdom and the Jew lusting after her. And such nakedness! It continues in my eye, splendouring. It will always be there, an image of such power as to confer unending Now upon the mind that holds it. Always now the great dark house in the Keinjudenstrasse late at night. Always now I, the solitary late-night Jew walking where he is not wanted. In the nights of the days before Tisha b'Av I walk there. I see late at night the dark house. Suddenly in an upper window I see a triangle of dim golden light, becoming a narrow oblong of dim golden light in which bulks the dark shape of a man in a nightshirt. The man moves away and there stands revealed, farther back within the room, the woman naked with her back to the window. Her shoulders are shaking, she has her hands up to her face. How I love her!

Never again! Always and for ever again and again. In my mind I see the night sky, I see three stars burning between the Virgin and the Lion, they are like a gesture, a Jewish gesture, the hand flung up, fingers spread: Well, then! What are your intentions, will you block the road for ever?

There she is, glorious and pathetic in that dim golden light. The splendid form of her contains her name as a candle contains its wick, her name still unknown to me, when I know it it will flame for me. Gone! the great dark house all black again.

Sophia! name unknown to me! Name that will burn in my mind like a candle flame burning straight up in still air above its translucent column of white wax.

JEWS ARE KNOWN to be clever but I did nothing clever; I simply hung about the

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Keinjudenstrasse day and night with no thought for anything else until that bulging-necked man climbed heavily on to his horse and rode away. I bribed no servants, I asked no one how long he would be gone, I felt honour bound to take my naked chance. I came as one who seeks a miracle; caution seemed sacrilegious.

Nightfall, and he had not come back. I hear the hooting of an owl, I hear the wind sighing, the summer wind in the trees of the garden. Outside the forbidden garden of the great dark house I wait. This is perhaps the centre of time for me, this waiting in expectation of a miracle, this waiting in a state of transcendental desire, in a state of sin made holy by its purity.

The hours pass, the first-quarter moon appears in the sky like a password, I go into the garden. There is of course a ladder there; for the Jew desirous of Wisdom there is always a ladder. The house is all dark, there is no light showing anywhere. I have no plan, I lean the ladder up against the house and I climb up.

The shutters are open, the casement is open, I feel on my face the warm breath of the dark window, there is a scent of oranges, of bitter aloes, of lions, of tawniness, there is a scent of the nakedness of the unseen woman within. Suddenly she is there, glimmering in her nakedness like a glimmering fish in the river of the night. I feel as if I am falling, falling backward with a silent scream into the garden. Has she pushed away the ladder? She has not pushed away the ladder, I am not falling, her two hands grip my wrists, she is pulling me into the window, she is whispering, "Thou Jew! My Jew!"

"Thou Jew! My Jew!" The miracle has happened, no explanations are necessary. With a miracle one is immediately *thou* and the rest follows, the rest has already been going on before one arrived, the moment is prepared and ready.

The centre of time is, as I have said, the waiting. This is now off the centre, this is the motion of the everything, the action of the universe, the destined world-line of the soul, the living heart of the mystery.

There are few words between us. I say, over and over again, "Thou beautiful, thou beautiful!" She says, "Thou Jew! My Jew!" Only one other thing does she say, her name when I ask it: her name is Sophia. Then I say, again and again in that wondrous warm breathy darkness, her name. Sophia, Sophia, Sophia.

SEE ME, the Jew fresh from the attainment of Wisdom, the Jew returning with the dawn of the Ninth of Av. See me as a bird might see me, as might that stork that slowly flaps its way over the huddled roofs and chimneys, over the narrow twisting streets of morning. What might this stork see looking down? Here the Jew comes, turning this way, turning that way, threading his homeward path and drawing closer, closer to those others hurrying towards him, turning this way, turning that way as if by careful prearrangement, these others with bill-hooks and pitchforks following a sow who wears a scarlet cross. The sow has her snout uplifted and is grunting loudly. "A Jew! A Jew!" shouts the man who holds her rope, "She smells a Jew!" Here they come running towards me, reeking of cow dung, sweat, beer, pigs, shouting, "A Jew! A Jew!"

They hurl themselves upon me, they throw me to the cobblestones, some of them sit on my chest, some of them hold my arms and legs. My tunic is pulled up, my hose are pulled down. O God! I feel the cool air of dawn on my nakedness. O God! I know what they are going to do and I cannot move a limb to help myself.

"The covenant!" cries some lout. "The mark of the covenant!"

"Cut it off and make a Christian of him", says the man with the sow.

"Look at that thing", says someone else. "You can be sure he's had Christian women with it, filthy brute."

"He won't have them any more", says the man with the sow.

O God! I pray in my mind. O God! Don't let this happen! I feel the knife on me. I think of Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon martyred in the Hadrianic persecutions, wrapped in the Scroll of the Law and burned at the stake. As he died he said that he saw the parchments burning but the letters of the Torah flying up out of the fire. I too now see the black letters shimmering and twisting as they rise on the heated air, soaring above the flames like birds of holy speech to the blue sky. I see the black letters writhing round the holy nakedness of Sophia going up, up, out of sight into the blue morning.

How can I be brave, strong, a real man, a hero? All I can do is not give them a screaming Jew to laugh at. "God wills it!" they cry with stinking breath as they cut off my manhood. I vomit but I do not scream.

"Finish him off", says someone.

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"Let him live", says another sort of voice. It is the tax-collector on his horse at the head of the town militia.

"God wills it!" shouts the man with the sow.

"This also", says the officer of the watch, and he prods the sow with his pike. She squeals and runs off with the peasant soldiers of Christ followed by the town militia. The tax-collector, high above me on his horse that snorts and prances and paws the cobbles, looks down at me with a pale face then looks back over his shoulder. I hear voices approaching: "Jews, Jews! Give us more Jews!"

"Pray for me", says the tax-collector. "This way!" he shouts to the approaching peasants. With the scraping of hooves horse and rider plunge away, leading the peasants away from where I am, leading them towards the town gate.

Pray for him! Did he actually say that, did I hear him right? "*Betet für mich.*" What else could it have been? "*Tretet mich*"? "Kick me"? Ridiculous; the man could not possibly have asked me either to pray for him or to kick him. I have a sudden hysterical vision of the two cherubim leaning towards each other over the Ark of the Covenant, the one saying, "Pray for me" and the other, "Kick me." I don't know what to make of it: this man, this husband of Sophia, this man whom I have just cuckolded, has saved my life, such as it now is.

I AM LYING ON MY BACK alone on the cobblestones, my tunic stuffed into my wound. It is broad day, above me arches the blue sky. High overhead, so very, very, high in the sky, circle a drift of storks, a meditation of storks, circling like those intersecting circles of tiny writing sometimes done by copyists with texts of the Holy Scriptures. They are so high, those storks, that one couldn't say what they are unless one knows, as I do, that every year faithfully come these great dignified black-and-white birds to nest on our rooftops and to circle high in the sky over our town, returning each year in their season.

I smell burning, there is smoke drifting between me and the sky; that will be from the synagogue. Here I must say that I have never been a devout Jew. I owned a skullcap and a prayer shawl and phylacteries; I always turned up at the synagogue for the High Holy Days and I had never before missed Tisha b'Av but my observances were mostly for the sake of appearances; in between I went my own way. God was to me as a parent to whom I had given little obedience and from whom I expected no inheritance.

Now, lying on the cobblestones looking up at the blue sky and smelling the burning, I cry out to God in my agony: "O God!" I say, "Why is this? What's the use of it? What good is it to anybody?"

God says nothing to me.

"Hear, O Israel", I cry: "the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Magnified and sanctified be his great name in the world which he hath created according to his will. What are we? What is our life? What is our piety? What is our righteousness? What our helpfulness? What our strength? What our might? What shall we say before thee, O Lord our God and God of our fathers? Are not all the mighty men as nought before thee, the men of renown as though they had not been, the wise as if without knowledge, and the men of understanding as if without discernment? For most of their works are void, and the days of their lives are vanity before thee, and the pre-eminence of man over the beast is nought, for all is vanity."

Still no word from God. The blue sky is perfectly blank, the smoke of the burning synagogue drifts in the still morning air; it's going to be a hot day.

"God!" I cry, "Whatever you are and whatever I am, speak to me! O Lord, do it for thy name's sake. Do it for the sake of thy truth; do it for the sake of thy covenant; do it for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; do it for the sake of Moses and Aaron; do it for the sake of David and Solomon. Do it for the sake of Jerusalem, thy holy city; do it for the sake of Zion, the tabernacle of thy glory, do it for the sake of thy Temple's desolation; do it for the sake of the destruction of thy altar; do it for the sake of those slain for thy holy name; do it for the sake of those slaughtered for thy Unity; do it for the sake of those who went through fire and water for the sanctification of thy name. Do it for the sake of sucklings who have not sinned; do it for the sake of weanlings who have not transgressed; do it for the sake of the schoolchildren.

"Answer us, O Lord, answer us; answer us, O our God, answer us; answer us, O our Father, answer us. . . ."

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IT WAS THEN that the air began to shimmer and Christ appeared to me. He was tall, lean, and sinewy. One of those fair Jews with his hair further lightened by the bleaching of the sun. Very light blue eyes, perfectly intrepid eyes drooping a little towards the outside of the face, the eyes of a fighter, the eyes of a lion. He was wearing a patched robe, his sandals were worn, his feet looked hard and hard-travelled. He stood there with a silence flung down in front of him. He was no one in whom I had any belief but there he was and there was no mistaking who he was.

I looked at him and listened to his silence for a while. When I was able to speak I said, "You're not the one I was calling."

He said, "I'm the one who came though. I'm the one you'll talk to from now on."

I saw his lips move but his voice came from inside my head. It made me feel very strange, being on the outside of his voice. I knew that if I were capable of running and were to run away to a distance where I could no longer see his lips move I should still hear his voice inside my head. A woodwind sort of voice with something of the timbre of a modern oboe, it seemed to have in it a capability of vibration that would move the plates of the earth apart; it was a voice that made a great space happen all round it, and all that space was inside my head. Feeling vast and hollow, hearing only a silence all round me and my own voice far, far away inside my head, I said, trying to synchronise my lips with my words, "Until now I've dealt with your father."

He said, "Until now you've dealt with no one and no one's dealt with you."

I said, "Is this the Day of Reckoning then?"

He said, "Every day is the Day of Reckoning." The way his voice filled all the great echoing vastness inside my head was frightening; I wanted to get away from him but I was afraid to try even to stand up because of the bleeding. I looked all round me; my member and testicles were nowhere in sight. I thought of them thrown away like offal, I thought of them eaten by the Jew-finding sow, I vomited again.

I said, "I want to talk to your father", then I held my head and waited for his answer to echo inside me.

He said, "Humankind is a baby, it always wants a face bending over the cradle."

I said, "God's our father, isn't he?"

He said, "God isn't a he, it's an it."

I said, "Where is it, his strong right arm that was stretched out over us?"

He said, "It's gone."

I said, "Have I got to be my own father now?"

He said, "Be what you like but remember that after me it's the straight action and no more dressing up."

Neither of us said anything for a little while. I didn't want him to go away but I didn't want to hear his voice inside my head.

"Will there be a Last Judgment?" I said.

He said, "The straight action *is* the last judgment; there's no face on the front of it, it has no front or back."

WE ARE WALKING, I am leaning on Jesus, with his right arm round me he keeps me from falling, I feel the strength in him rising like a column. In the morning sunlight rises the smoke from the synagogue. The fire crackles, the flames are pale in the bright morning. Suddenly there is so much space between the Jewish quarter and the rest of the town! Suddenly the Christian roofs are sharp and distant, they are looking away. In the great space all round the synagogue the bodies of the dead are vivid, the blood fresh and dark on the cobbles. The cobbles themselves seem to have put themselves into patterns I have not noticed before: there are twisting serpents, shifting pyramids, I see the face of a lion that comes and goes. There are many Jews flattened to the earth, limbs all asprawl, mouths open. The children are just as dead as the grown-ups, it seems precocious. It is a very informal gathering, there have been scenes of intimacy with no attempt at privacy. Here among the scattering of random guests and witnesses is an impromptu bride of the soldiers of Christ. White thighs, black hose, skirt flung over her face. Did they call her *thou*?

"Thou Jew", I say to Jesus, "tell me about this conversion of the Jews."

"What conversion?" says Jesus.

"From life to death", I say. "Why does it keep happening? Why is it God's will?"

Jesus turns his face to me and opens wide his eyes. There come upon me such a shuddering and a blackness, such an expanding *pleroma*, such an intolerable fullness that I am filled to bursting with it. I open, open, open but cannot contain it, I explode in all directions to infinity,

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I contract to a point, I explode again from the point, I come back together and return shuddering and full of terror.

"Forgive me, Lord", I say.

There come into my mind thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud. There comes into my mind the sanctified mountain that might not be touched, neither by beast nor man. There comes into my mind a voice saying in Greek:

> "For not ye have approached to a mountain being felt and having been ignited with fire and to darkness and to deep gloom and to whirlwind and of trumpet to a sound and to a voice of words, which the ones hearing entreated not to be added to them a word; not they bore for the thing being charged: If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned; and, so fearful was the thing appearing, Moses said: Terrified I am and trembling. . . ."

Jesus says, "Can you contain even the expectation of the full reply of me to you? Can you contain even the silence before my answer to you?"

I say, "No, Lord, I cannot contain it."

Jesus says, "Can you contain even the thought of knowing the will of God? I speak not of the knowing; I speak only of the very thought of knowing."

I say, "No, Lord, I cannot even contain that thought."

Jesus says, "If it be God's incomprehensible will that the universe shall flower to the end of all things and from that end of all things seed itself anew, will you question the slaughter of Jews? You see on the cobbles the dead who were alive, who sprang from the leap of the lightning that cleaves the dark that waits for the leap after the stillness, the stillness after the leap. You see the dead: backward into their life and forward into their death extends the black-body spectrum of their being; their diffraction is as yours. Will you offer an opinion?"

I say, "I have no opinion, Lord."

JESUS incorporates me in his glance and I begin to see him in more than one way. Jesus is the great dead Lion of the World and in his mouth is the live black body of Christ Radiant. The great dead lion is walking the rocks and desert, walking the mountains and the high ground, looking down on deep gorges where rivers serpentine, and in his mouth the live black body of him the one radiant, him the Christ flickering his black-body spectrum, flames all dancing on the live black body of him in the mouth of the great dead lion of himself. The black body opens, it is a sky of lightning, a sea of fire, mountains of ice. The sky grows tiny, contracts to one black dot, absorbs the sea of fire, the mountains of ice. The black dot opens out into the great live Lion of the World. In his mouth the tiny dead golden body of Christ. In the mouth of the tiny dead golden body of Christ is the world, the sun, the moon, the stars, the wheeling heavens of night. Far and far the thunder of his silence rolls, the lion roars, the stars shake, flicker, burn to paleness and morning.

Silence. The lion is a great paper kite, blue and yellow, the paper fluttering in the morning wind. Far, far down goes the string to Jesus winding in the kite. The lion-kite bursts into flame, the flame runs down the string, Jesus is on fire.

All round the three hundred and sixty degrees of the horizon dance the avatars of Burning Jesus, Christ as fire in perfect silence dancing. One for every degree of the circle, three hundred and sixty avatars of Burning Jesus dancing the colour of Jew, dancing the full black-body spectrum of Jew. One by one the emissions cease, one by one the colours disband, the burning avatars rejoin each one the next and all go back to one, the live black body of Christ Radiant in the centre of the great circle of fire, the burning world-circle. The motion of the dance continues, it is bursting the skin of the sky. The colour of Jew is rent with a great ripping down the centre of the sky.

Leaning on Jesus and held up by him, suddenly I rage at him. Feeble, unmanned, weak from loss of blood I rage at him the Christ, him the anointed one. "Who are you to put these pictures in my eyes!" I say to him. "Thou Jew! Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, the Lord is One! The Lord is not three and you are not the One. What kind of a Jew are you to turn the world against your people? Images are worshipped in your name! In your name Jews are slaughtered!"

"Whatever I am", says Jesus, "I'm the one you talk to from now on."

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I THINK: O God, what if he's right? What if God's gone and I never really had a chance to talk to him? Forgotten prayers crowd my head, I look away from Jesus, I look up to the sky. "Answer us, O Lord!" I cry, "answer us on the Fast day of our Affliction, for we are in great trouble; turn not to our wickedness, and hide not thy presence from us, nor conceal thyself from our supplication; be near, we pray, to our cry, let thy kindness, we beg, comfort us; answer us, even before we call unto thee, according to that which is said: 'And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer; while they are speaking, I will hear!' For thou, O Lord, art the one that answerest in time of trouble, redeemest and deliverest in all times of trouble and distress! Blessed art thou, O Lord (Blessed be he and blessed be his name!) who answerest in time of trouble. (Amen!)"

There was a long silence after my prayer, then Jesus said, "Did you feel that prayer going anywhere or did it just go out of you?"

"It just went out of me", I said.

"You're shaking an empty tree", said Jesus. "You're letting down your bucket in a dry well. There was no answer when the knife was on your flesh and there'll be no answer now. And for what do you pray now? The thing has already been done and you are cut off from your generations."

"Thou Christ!" I say, remembering suddenly whom I'm talking to, "thou Christ who fed the hungry, cast out demons, healed the sick and raised the dead! Surely thou wilt restore me to my manhood!"

Jesus shook his head. "The fig tree stayed barren", he said, "and you will stay a eunuch; it is what you wished."

I wasn't sure I'd heard him right, I couldn't believe what he was saying. When he said this we were not walking, I was in my bed, dispersed in two-dimensional sunlit patterns like an infinitely extending oriental carpet. I seemed to have been there for some time. "What did you say?" I said.

Jesus said, "I said it is what you wished."

I said, "Can you have seen Sophia and say that? I am young, the blood in me runs hot, I lust but I am unmanned. I lust, I long, I yearn, I hunger, I hum like a tuning fork, I flutter like a torn banner in the wind. That which I was I can never be again, that which I am is intolerable, that which I shall be I cannot imagine. I glimmer like a distant candle, I mottle like the sunlight on the carpet, like the shadows of leaves. I am something, I am nothing, I am here, I am gone."

"It is what you wished", said Jesus. "Only now do you hum, flutter, glimmer, mottle, be something, be nothing, be here, be gone with me. Only now are you tuned to me."

"Never did I wish to be a eunuch", I said, "and never did I wish to be tuned to you."

Jesus said, "And there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens. The one being able to grasp it let him grasp."

I said, "I never made myself a eunuch."

Jesus said, "Life moves by exchanges; loss is the price of gain. Some pay with one thing, some with another; whatever is most dear, that is my price."

I said, "Why is that your price?"

Jesus said. "What is dear is what is held dear, and there can be no holding by those who go my road; there can be no holding by those who will be here with me and gone with me."

I said, "Never did I ask to go that road, never did I wish to be here with you, gone with you."

Jesus said, "Always you wished it, and most of all when you put hand and foot to that ladder of love and pleasure. In your soul you called to me, you longed for me when you climbed that ladder. With eager hands you reached for pleasure and held it fast but whoever holds on wishes to let go because what is held becomes heavy; whoever holds on wishes to let go because attachment is not wholeness: the only wholeness is in being with everything and attached to nothing; the only wholeness is in letting go, and I am the letting go."

I said, "I know nothing of all this."

"You will know", said Jesus, "and your knowing in time to come will make you know it now."

"What is between us, you and me?" I said.

"Everything", said Jesus.

"Why me?" I said.

"Why not you?" said Jesus.

I, PILGERMANN, poor bare tuned fork, humming with the foreverness of the Word that is always Now. Unbearing the Unbearable, intolerating the Intolerable, being not enough for the Too-Muchness. I, poor harp of a Jew twanging incessantly in the mouth of Jesus, in

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the lion-mouth of Christ Pandamator, Christ All-Subduer. There is a point where pattern becomes motion; the pattern has found me and I must move, must be aware of moving, must be a motion, an action of the Word. Poor bare tuned fork.

"Blessed are they that are tuned to me", said Jesus.

"Why?" I said.

"Because they shall move", said Jesus. "They shall go, they shall have action."

While he was saying that I was thinking: I, poor eunuch of my Lord, neither sheep nor goat, neither of the left hand nor of the right, subject always to Christ the redeemer, the ransom, the sacrifice, victim, torturer, murderer, bringer of death. Iesous Christous Thanatophoros. Kyrios.

Jesus said, "I am the light of day. Do you believe?"

"I believe", I said.

Jesus said, "I am the energy that will not be still. I am a movement and a rest but at the same time I am all movement and no rest and you will have no rest but in the constant motion of me. Do you believe?"

"I believe", I said.

"Why do you believe?" said Jesus.

"No belief is necessary", I said. "It manifests itself."

Jesus said, "Why in your mind do you call me bringer of death? Why in your mind am I Iesous Christous Thanatophoros?"

I said, "How can I not think of you as Thanatophoros? Whoever wants to kill a Jew does it in your name. In your name they kill the seed that gave you life."

Jesus said, "From me came the seed that gave me life."

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## Vegetarian's Vertigo

They have kidnapped the girl on the cheese counter,
the meat-eating maenads from over the aisle;
they are shaving her legs with whiny razors,
plucking her head like a billiard ball.

Somewhere they have her, my dairymaid darling,
gutting her quiet as fishwives cod;
the carnivorous oafs, the file-toothy cannibals
for whom Gorgonzola is not a god.

Mommas in Stetsons are mumbling her nipples,
gibbering grandmas dividing her waist;
her eyes are a gulping dowager's oysters,
her lips escargots on charwomen's toast.

That exquisite rump's green-garnished with parsley,
those ears on sticks popped in cocktails (prawn);
and gatecrashers picking, playing her bones
like scales on a mouth-organ, tuppence a tune.

Oh my heart's slapped wide on a windy clothes-line,
my heart's beat daft as a dusty rug;
I'm lost and lone in what's coming over—
a snail in a sandstorm, a bug in a fug.

Oh I won't sleep tonight for the grinding of jaws,
and if I stop by tomorrow to publish my gall
what's the betting some bleached deodorised doll
won't forcefeed me processed—glazed wrapper and all?

*Geoffrey Holloway*

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*Laurence Martin*

# Can there be National Security in an Insecure Age?

## *A Balance Sheet of Conventional Hopes & Nuclear Dangers*

OUR ONLY HOPE of correctly anticipating the future is to consider the past—but the apparent pace of change on the strategic scene since the end of the Second World War entails some danger of exaggerating the extent to which the rest of this century will take a novel form.

That there have been many important changes is undeniable. The number of sovereign states has virtually trebled, with a consequent massive multiplication of the possible patterns of international relationships. Perhaps the change is most dramatic around the shores of the Indian Ocean, now a complex network of inter-state relations, yet less than half-a-century ago almost entirely under the control of one imperial power.

During the same period a technological revolution, dominated by but by no means confined to the development of nuclear weapons, has transformed both military and civilian life. The universal spread of mass media and mass politics—if, sadly, not of democracy—has simultaneously altered the political context within which strategy must be evolved and applied.

So far the picture is of change. It is all the more striking, therefore, to notice how *familiar* the broad pattern of international relations would appear to an observer from any former phase in the history of nation states. Conflict is endemic and very largely ordered in terms of the inter-state system. Despite some minor trans- and sub-national phenomena, it is inter-state relations that matter most and these are still characterised by alliances, armed confrontation, and war.

The international security "system" is, thus, rather stable in its character and even the "state" of that system has changed less than one might casually imagine.

The two Superpowers who polarised the post–1945 peace settlement still dominate the scene. Even the others among the original five permanent members of the Security Council, if joined by the two powers Japan and Germany briefly, excluded from recognition by defeat, constitute a very large proportion of the more decisive elements on the international security scene. There are, of course, important changes afoot, some already quite far advanced: the rise of India and Brazil; the gradual erosion of white footholds in Africa; above all the increasing number of conflicts and crises arising wholly among the new nations and not having their origins in the relations of the older powers.

Recent experience suggests, however, that the really difficult and dangerous crises arise not from some pattern that can be discerned emerging from systematic change, but from relatively random excursions from that process. It should have been possible, for instance, to foresee the revival of fundamentalist Islam as a political force but hardly the coincidence of the Ayatollah Khomeini's character with the Shah's illness. The Falkland crisis has a long history, but the coincidence of one of its eruptions with an unusually strong-willed British Prime Minister was harder to foresee. Nor is it easy to anticipate even the conscious strategies of others: contingency planning for the Berlin Crisis of 1959–61 failed to predict the Wall, and few if any who surveyed Soviet options in the more recent Polish crisis suggested use of the Polish armed forces to impose martial law.

LAURENCE MARTIN'S *considerations of the prospects of war and peace put him into the centre of the international discussion of strategy and arms control when he delivered the 1981 BBC Reith Lectures, which have since been published as "The Two-Edged Sword: Armed Force in the Modern World" (Weidenfeld). He was from 1968–77 Professor of War Studies at King's College, London, and is now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.*



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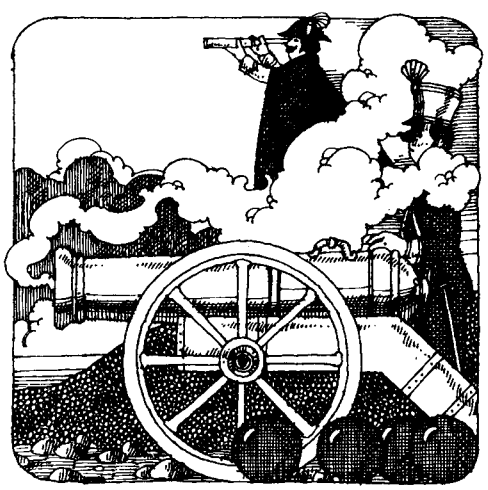
Thus, as we look to the future, it behooves us to expect surprise; and as we are so bad at defusing surprises by foretelling them, it is perhaps wiser to try to surprise-proof our policies by flexibility. That being said, it seems likely that the context of Western security policies in 2000 AD will be surprisingly like the present. 1982 to 2000 is, after all, a much shorter period than that we have already traversed in the nuclear age.

BEFORE PROCEEDING TO SAY something of that coming context we should perhaps consider what we mean by "security." Webster's Dictionary offers alternatives: "freedom from fear or anxiety, freedom from danger, freedom from want or deprivation." There is a great deal to learn from those definitions. Fear is an emotion concerning the future; the present we know and have adjusted to; it is what may happen to us next that concerns us. We might therefore paraphrase the definitions as *assurance of future well-being*. This definition, however, like Webster's "freedom from want or deprivation", reminds us that most people are not preoccupied with the notions that fascinate "strategists"; most people are more regularly concerned with what we call "social security" or "the pocket-book issues." Put somewhat differently, threats to well-being arise on two planes: one as man wrestles with his natural environment in search of "welfare", and the other as man wrestles with man in human conflict. Social security is paralleled by strategic security.

In the two or three centuries preceding our own, Western thinkers evolved and popularised the idea that most, if not all, of the security problems of a strategic nature arose from mistaken ideas about how to pursue social welfare. If only mercantilist notions of conflict and conquest were replaced with the enlightened insights of the new economics—that wealth was best achieved by investment, trade, and exploitation of the principle of comparative advantage—everyone would be better off. Far from furthering these goals, military expenditure and war obstructed them.



This conception of enlightened self-interest accorded well with principles of social justice and mutual beneficence emerging in domestic society, and enabled them to be extended on to the international scene. As these views permeated liberal societies, the idea that war was scarcely ever advisable, if at all, became widely diffused and this idea, in turn, became confused in many minds with the notion that war was actually becoming impossible. Just such confusion was the fate of one of perhaps the most famous expressions of the "War Doesn't Pay" theory: Norman Angell's book, *The Great Illusion*, published in 1910.

THE GREAT WAR quickly dispelled the illusions about the impracticability of war, though the results rather reinforced scepticism about its profitability. The foundation of the League of Nations, like that of the United Nations after the next War, testified to the universal appeal—or at least, to a general sense of need to publicly endorse the merits—of measures to avoid war.

In reality, contrary to the liberal dream of universal peace based on enlightened self-interest, the world continues to be one of endemic conflict and frequent war, in which armed force plays a dominant role. Within the zones most closely associated with the two Superpowers, the balance has been stabilised by nuclear deterrence and actual war has been rare and limited. For that very reason military power is paradoxically an absorbing preoccupation within those zones, and the state of the strategic balance has rarely been more closely watched. It is war and not military power that has been downgraded as an instrument of policy and basis for security. Elsewhere, open warfare remains common and, in the last few years alone, the world has been full of satisfied users of armed force: North Viet Nam, Israel, Egypt, India and Mr Mugabe in Zimbabwe, to name but several.

This does not mean, however, that democratic peoples have abandoned the aspirations conjured up by humane theorists over the past few

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centuries. Indeed, the advent of the nuclear weapon—an instrument of policy that could destroy the very nations on whose behalf it would be wielded—has lent greater urgency and immeasurably stronger emotional force to the search for peaceful methods of conflict resolution. In a strategic world where most is familiar, it is indeed the nuclear weapon that simultaneously raises the feeling that ours is an unprecedentedly insecure world and that, surely, there is now incentive enough to do something about it. Powerful though this belief is, however, it is too negative and diffuse to transform a world of conflict automatically into one of harmony, or to eliminate (even if it profoundly modifies) the traditional problem of maintaining international equilibrium.

IF WE TURN AGAIN to Webster's definitions, we notice the distinction between freedom from fear and freedom from danger. We may feel safe when we are not. Indeed, until quite recent times, the English word *security* meant precisely an ill-founded sense of safety. It is the difficult task of Western strategists, therefore, to preserve the real safety of their nations in an environment of conflict which the nations would rather ignore and at a price in money, and often blood, which the peoples would, quite reasonably, rather not pay. Moreover, this task must be performed in large part against totalitarianisms that have managed very largely to insulate their populations from the liberal attitudes to armed force or, at least, to deprive them of any effective way of any effective expression of pacificism.

Besides their obvious tendency to undermine the general level of defensive preparedness, pacifistic attitudes can also have very specific strategic effects—and these are not always benign, even by the standards of their proponents. The bitter Cruise-missile debate is merely the latest and most intense stage in a process whereby, over many recent years, a combination of anti-militarism and ecological enthusiasm has made every new Western weapons programme a minor—and now, not so minor—ideological debate. In these cases technology is the enemy, and innovation tends to be condemned whatever the strategic rationale. Yet while many innovations doubtless are wasteful and misguided, others (like the submarine-launched missile in its day) may constitute a real step towards stability.

Somewhat similarly, reminders of war that take the form of *precaution* rather than *protest* are also increasingly difficult to implement in the democracies. Civil defence is currently a lively example of this but there are many others, whose strategic rationale is less questionable. Simple fortifications in West Germany, for instance, or even somewhat more elaborate preparations to create them in emergency, might do much at low cost (and with absolutely no danger to life or appearance of bellicosity) to slow down a potential Soviet invasion, and thereby to reduce the fear of surprise that is one of the more destabilising elements in the European balance. But for decades a quite understandable West German reluctance to be reminded that their land could be a battlefield has made such steps impossible. In crises, similar attitudes—and a feeling that bold measures are provocative—put a high political price on precautionary measures, even though an alliance reluctant to maintain a high degree of military readiness in peacetime is inevitably very dependent on prompt response to warning signs. It is therefore very possible, indeed probable, that, more than technological evolution or particular strategic developments, it is the evolution of *public attitudes* toward defence that will have the most decisive effect on the effectiveness of Western security policies from now until the year 2000.

SUBJECT TO THAT proviso and to the warning about historical surprise, what form will the strategic world take over the coming couple of decades?

I have already suggested that, if one must make a prediction, the safest seems to be that it will be recognisably like the present. Why should it not be so? But there are several leading themes in the outlook of those who see fundamental change. All have some validity, yet there is no reason to conclude that any will prove wholly revolutionary.

One such theory is that conflict will be organised much more around economic issues than around the issues of ideology and political independence that have chiefly characterised—not without strong economic components, of course—our post-War world hitherto. Mercantilism would, indeed, experience a revival. This idea has been greatly stimulated by worries about global capacity to sustain and absorb economic growth and, above all, by the Oil Shock and the rising price and uncertain availability of energy.

Already conflicts have broken out over

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"resource" issues: China's seizure of the supposedly oil-rich Paracel Islands is a frequently cited example; the exacerbation of the Greek-Turkish dispute in the Aegean by oil prospects is another. On a much wider view, there is no denying that the slowdown in economic growth is producing serious political problems. In the 1970s the less developed countries slipped to half the growth rate they had enjoyed in the 1960s. The richer countries also face well-publicised pressures on their economies. Such problems inevitably create tensions and reduce the scope for alleviating them. While exaggerated, there is no doubt something to the theory that régimes in difficulties are tempted to seek distractions in foreign adventure. Economic stringency may reduce the resources for using economic rather than military levers of policy. It may also, of course, reduce the resources expended on military power—but whether this stabilises the international environment depends on whether it occurs in a symmetrical fashion. Even if it did, conflict would remain possible, for some of the bloodiest wars (like the American Civil War), have occurred between initially lightly-armed combatants.

Nevertheless, I find it hard to believe that such issues will come to dominate the international scene rather than become merely an important added dimension to the ebb-and-flow of conflict driven most powerfully by fears and hopes of ideological and political ascendancy. One reason why this seems likely is the fact that economic issues are, by their nature, open to compromise and a sharing-out of the spoils and benefits; more political issues are frequently matters of all-or-nothing. Clearly a Soviet seizure of Middle Eastern oil supplies would be a major potential *casus belli*. But, equally, the motives for such a seizure and for the response would be only superficially economic, and would stem in reality from the global hegemonial conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

## *US Bishops &*

**THE PROPOSED pastoral letter on war and peace is the latest effort by the American bishops of the Roman Catholic Church to provide spiritual guidance on one of the most disturbing realities of our time.**

**The National Conference of Catholic Bishops clearly cannot claim great strategic expertise. Nonetheless, one expects its guidance to be based on informed strategic assessments as well as moral judgments. The council has the ability and the responsibility to learn enough about the issues involved to make accurate judgments—even if they are guarded and limited. The draft of the pastoral letter—the council sent it back to committee for revision and is to vote on it in May—does not reflect this kind of thoughtful assessment.**

*Most troubling, the letter fails to deal with the reality that nuclear weapons exist and cannot be disinvented. To join in the unrealizable call for total or unilateral disarmament is to negate the seriousness of the effort to reduce, limit and, to the degree possible, prevent the use of nuclear weapons.*

**THE BISHOPS have attempted to use St. Augustine's concept of what is a "just war" to judge the use of nuclear weapons. They have determined that it is not applicable because there is an "overwhelming probability that a nuclear exchange would have no limits" and "would [therefore] violate the principle of discrimination and proportionality." In addition, they are uncertain of "the morality of deterrence" if it contributes in any way to the legitimation of nuclear war.**

**I would argue that the nuclear age has not rendered the church's doctrine of just war obsolete. On the contrary, it has become more imperative than ever to meet the highest and most stringent criteria of justification for waging war—and, equally important to strengthen, not question, the efficacy of deterrence.**

*Some themes in the letter seem instinctively correct and reasonable. For example, it advocates that the United States adopt a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons. I first made such a proposal about 20 years ago and have continued to champion it ever since. But the church virtually stretches the concept to a no-use-at-all position that I believe is dangerous. Instead, nuclear weapons should be considered taboo except to deter, balance and correct for their possession or use by others. One cannot disinvent nuclear weapons, nor can one live in a world where nuclear weapons are thought of as just another means of resolving serious conflicts. To live with weapons, but to make as sure as possible that no one uses them, it must be clear that they are available as a last but credible resort to balance or correct for their use by others.*

*The pastoral letter is also on moral and political* terra firma *when it notes, following the just war theory, that there must be no use of nuclear weapons solely or mainly against civilians. But I, as a strategist, would again add "except as a last resort in very special circumstances." For example, imagine that an enemy nation destroyed a United States city just to teach us some kind of lesson but otherwise used no additional nuclear weapons. We might not be willing to launch a major nuclear war in response but might instead choose to retaliate according to the "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" law of the Old Testament. We would, in*

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MUCH THE SAME REASONING applies to a second commonly advanced theme in the argument that the international scene is about to be transformed—that is, that the "East-West" conflict is about to be replaced by the "North-South" dimension as the organising principle.

Once again the theme clearly has some substance. The mere multiplication of sovereignties inevitably increases the number of potential interstate conflicts, and many are between nations of "North" and "South." But the most dramatic increase in conflict is *South-South* rather than *North-South*. The South lacks coherence as a political entity, and the North is sharply divided by the East-West polarisation. Indeed the tendency, if any, is for the East-West conflict to polarise the South along similar lines—as the great powers of the North both seek advantages in the South, and also try to prevent the autonomous conflicts of the South becoming the catalyst to destroy the stability that East and West have established between themselves by a mixture of détente and deterrence.

Perhaps one of the more encouraging features of the past two decades has been the extent to which embryonic regional frameworks and balances have emerged in the South. I refer to such structures as the Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN), which has done much to steady nerves in the face of Vietnamese expansionism, and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which, though in frequent disarray, has reinforced African respect for existing borders and offered face-saving escape routes for several members who had over-reached themselves.

In carefully helping the forces of moderation in such emergent regional systems may lie the best hope of those members of the Northern world who would like to encourage orderly pluralism in the South. There is clearly a much more dangerous alternative possibility of the East-West tension extending South and taking a more explosive form

## *the Bomb*

*other words hit a city. But this would be an aberration.*

**ON ANOTHER POINT, the proposed letter states that "we cannot approve of every weapons system, strategic doctrine, or policy initiative advanced in the name of deterrence." Neither can we. But we can approve of some of them, and can give good reasons for supporting those we do and rejecting those we don't. A glib statement such as the bishops', without any further amplification, reflects a sincere concern but an unenlightened simplicity.**

**Similarly, it is counterproductive for the bishops to issue a facile, and probably incorrect, judgment that the United States must not have any weapons with counterforce ability because such weapons would be destabilizing. (No recognition is given to the fact that if civilians are not to be the target—and they shouldn't be—then weapons should be the target and the "destabilization" effect would not be significant.) Church leaders act equally irresponsibly when, with little or no supporting evidence and analysis, they argue that the probability of limited nuclear war is "infinitesimal."**

**They suggest, further, that civil defense programs are probably counter-productive because they contribute to a false belief in the survivability of a nuclear attack—"the presumption exists that defense against a nuclear attack is not feasible." (Yet studies show that civil defense measures could save tens of millions of lives.) In this, the bishops seem to be the victims of passing fashions—and leftist or liberal fashions at that—rather than exponents of objective analyses.**

IN FACT, *most of the problems I have with the pastoral document stem from the almost uncritical acceptance of many currently popular (and seemingly plausible) but largely emotional arguments. The letter seems to endorse the concept that a nuclear exchange would probably "threaten the created order." It is conceivable that it would, but we have no evidence to that effect. From whom, then, do the bishops receive this information? Certainly not from most scientists, military analysts, physicists and other informed and concerned citizens.*

*Because of its tremendous power and prestige, the church especially must be prepared to drop technical and strategic judgments that are either unproved or clearly wrong, and to defend as strongly as possible those moral canons on which there can be no compromise.*

**THE CRITICAL QUESTION, I think, is this: At what point does it become immoral to jeopardize our national security interests (read 220 million American lives) for some abstract or emotional judgment of the greater good?**

**The church has often taken positions that were costly in secular and material terms but well-founded on religious terms. The final draft of the pastoral letter would be an important and historic document, and everything possible should be done to make it so.**

**If it is intended as an enduring statement on war and peace in a nuclear age, then the implications of war-fighting doctrines and enhanced strategic defenses must be considered much more carefully than the bishops have done so far, and can certainly not simply be rejected out of hand. The Gospel according to fads isn't good enough.**

*Herman Kahn*
in THE NEW YORK TIMES

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in that less well-structured area, beyond the clear-cut spheres of deterrence, and rapidly acquiring significant autonomous military power. But this is not a new problem, and there is little sign that it can come to overshadow the mutual dealings of the still immensely more powerful nations of the North.

IF THIS SPECULATION were belied in the event, it might very well be because of the vindication of yet another theme espoused by the prophets of imminent and radical change: that the East-West conflict itself is waning.

This theme was more popular before Afghanistan, Poland, and the pace of Soviet military preparations blighted some of the more sanguine hopes that *détente* signified a fundamental resolution of differences. The Western yearning for harmony, however, is already producing a revival of hopes, and even those who see the limits of *détente* often feel compelled to speak its language and to abet the widespread confusion between the benefits of maintaining a balance of power and the possibility of dispensing with it.

The theme of "declining bipolarity" entwines two sub-themes: (*1*) that the Soviet Union is declining and/or mellowing; and (*2*) that the United States is on the decline and will be unable to maintain its position as leader of a Western coalition. Once again, there is naturally some substance to the theme. The United States organised its anti-Soviet alliance at a time when it had a nuclear monopoly and was economically overwhelmingly dominant, quite able to buy off much dissent among its lesser allies by generous aid and self-sacrificing trade and monetary policies. This degree of pre-eminence is irrevocably lost as a result of the success with which Japan and the West European allies have recovered.

But there is little sign that the other party to the quarrel, the Soviet Union, is "mellowing." True, it has its serious domestic problems about such issues as nationalities and, above all, economic performance. There is as yet, however, no sign at all that these are moderating Soviet military efforts: efforts that are built into the structure of Soviet domestic politics and which play an important part in legitimising the régime and its conduct. The Soviet people have been largely sheltered from the liberal critique of armed force, and those few dissidents who espouse it are quickly suppressed, even at the price of embarrassment for their useful counterparts in the West. Whatever the problem of the lesser nationalities, Great Russian nationalism seems to be in an earlier stage of evolution than that of Western Europe, while the Soviet state inherits a "dialectical" view of a world of conflict.

THERE SEEMS LITTLE REASON to believe, therefore, that the Soviet Union will become less vigorous in the near future in advancing its ambition for more extensive political influence or that military power—though not, for preference, war—will cease to play a major part in that effort. Whatever its relative decline, the United States is still the only state combining the power and will to organise a balance against these Soviet pretensions; and for that reason alone, the East-West polarisation seems bound to continue.

This does not mean, of course, that we should not welcome any responsible measures to mitigate that conflict or should refuse to contemplate new methods of conducting it. As the issues of the Gas Pipeline and Transfer of Technology have shown, there is an immediate subject for debate in whether trade and technological assistance to the Soviet Union might encourage it to seek intensive rather than extensive solutions for its economic problems, especially with regard to energy—"Angellism" in practice! Clearly there is already afoot a shift in the internal balance of the Western alliance that must continue to adjust to the altered proportions of economic capability. America's allies, long a responsibility, will have to become (as they have been and can increasingly be) an asset. This, in turn, means a more pluralistic

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approach to the problems of security, as divergent national preferences about means and objectives erode deference to the leading ally. Beyond certain limits, however such tendencies are incompatible with alliance; and adjusting this balance will be a major preoccupation over the next few years.

JUST AS THE Western alliance seems likely to have a more flexible character in the next few years if it is to have the resilience to survive—agreeing to differ over some of the out-of-treaty-area contingencies, for instance, while maintaining *ad hoc* cooperation to deal with them—so policies toward the Communist and Third Worlds may also have to become more variegated.

The sheer burden of exercising military power globally, in a world where an increasing amount of military capability is being diffused everywhere, suggests that security policy will have to be better described by the idea of "manipulation" than by "containment." Military power remains a necessary tool, especially where Soviet power is likely to be directly exercised. But, as we know from experience, so long as a Western armed response is possible, politically and militarily, Soviet military power tends *not* to be used directly. Consequently, those who speak of the primacy of political and economic weapons for the long-term solution of strategic problems have much to support their view. The preferred role of military power is to hold the ring for, and catalyse the effect of, such instruments. It is a role recommended both by the nature of political development in an age of mass politics both domestic and foreign, and by the good military principle of economy of force.

SO FAR I have tried to take a wide view and to avoid specifically military questions. These are, however, obviously crucial in a world of conflict, and there are clearly many quite important turning points to be negotiated over the next few years.

When futurologists consider the military scene, they very commonly concentrate on technological evolution. What they particularly look for, of course, is the prospect of some decisive, revolutionary "breakthrough." Because of the extended lead-time of military research and development, most of the weapons that could be in actual use by 2000 are already conceived of somewhere. There might, of course, be an immensely important concept pushed through with the haste of the "Manhattan Project"; but even the atomic bomb had had its basic conception early in the 1930s. Even under more modest assumptions, there are areas of technological development that could produce dramatic results. Among these are anti-ballistic missile systems, anti-satellite weapons, and, just conceivably, some innovations in anti-submarine warfare. Superficially less glamorous, but with possibly more practical potential, are the applications of precision guidance to land warfare.

Nevertheless, none of these possibilities seems likely to produce a revolutionary effect comparable to that of the thermonuclear bomb. Nuclear weapons, by taking the potential of destruction to levels well above any conceivable political purposes, introduced truly novel relationships of deterrence and, incidentally, did most to produce the deceleration of history that largely accounts for the slow pace of change in the fundamental political structure of the developed world since 1950. None of the technological innovations possibly imminent at present seems to have the same capacity to introduce an irreversible, fundamentally uncancellable strategic effect as the nuclear weapon. Anti-satellite technology and anti-ballistic missile systems arouse excitement precisely because they might to a degree negate nuclear systems and thus provide escape from deterrence. But it would only be to a degree, and both direct counter-measures and evasive devices such as bombers and Cruise-missiles offer obvious opportunities to restore the balance.

IF DETERRENCE is to be undermined, it seems more probable that it will be as a result of the trends in public opinion which I referred to at the beginning. The evolution of strategic policies and doctrines seems to promise more fundamental change than technological development. There is obviously at present a crisis of public confidence in long-accepted Western prescriptions for the nuclear age. In particular, a wave of doubt is engulfing the idea of "extended deterrence": the methods whereby American nuclear power guarantees the security of its allies.

Democratic public opinion, seized by the distaste for military power I have mentioned earlier, demands security without excessive cost. Deterrence by threat of retaliation against Soviet territory is the device by which the West has sought a cheap answer to the threats of both the nuclear

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weapon in general and the Soviet Union's military power in particular. Now that Soviet nuclear parity has made the possible consequences of a failure of deterrence all too obvious, opinion wavers between shrill anxiety and a constant temptation to ignore the problem.

THE YEARS UNTIL 2000 will be absorbed with the search for solutions to this dilemma. Not since the demise of "massive retaliation" has it been seriously argued that nuclear weapons *alone* can deliver security. Some of the most important theoretical and practical questions, therefore, concern the interface between the nuclear and the conventional.

Here the trends are ambiguous. Technology—with increased accuracy making smaller nuclear yields more effective, yet with the same accuracy and novel designs also increasing the efficacy of conventional devices—is tending to blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional so far as purely military functions are concerned. The public and the politicians, however, alarmed to some extent by this very trend—"making the world safe for nuclear war"—increasingly demand a sharper division, as exemplified most recently by the call for a NATO policy of "No First Use."

There are serious difficulties for the West here. It has to be asked whether any form of purely conventional defence can have the stabilising deterrent aura of a nuclear strategy. Paradoxically, while conventional weapons are the first line of *defence*, nuclear weapons have been the leading edge of *deterrence*. Moreover, it needs to be proven that an Alliance that has formally declared the unacceptability of nuclear war, by adopting a "No First Use" policy, can successfully maintain an adequate second-strike capability at the West European theatre level, when the main nuclear power is distant and the main enemy has provided itself with a clearly differentiated offensive theatre nuclear force. In an alliance where only the European sector is vulnerable to conventional attack, a "No First Use" policy may seem to put too much of the "flexibility" in response on the European end of the partnership. It may be, therefore, that any trend towards postponing nuclear action at the theatre level would have to be accompanied by preparation for "limited strategic options" so as to keep the consequences of even theatre nuclear action unacceptable to the Soviet Union.

Not even that, however, would solve the problem of Soviet conventional superiority.

Illustration: Claus Kretzy

THE CONVENTIONAL ANSWER to that problem is—more "conventional" forces. Few strategists—though quite a lot of taxpayers—deny the desirability of stronger NATO conventional forces; but as a panacea it is a rather tired prescription with a long history of not being filled. The challenge will remain over the next two decades, and the difficulties are unlikely to disappear.

THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY great possibilities for increasing the effectiveness of even the present level of Western military investment; and, once again, some of the most seductive opportunities lie in the exploitation of technology.

It has become commonplace to enthuse about new conventional military technology and to declare that it favours the defence. If it does, history also suggests that the situation will be temporary. Moreover, the aggressor is not always on the offensive or the victim—if he is to have any chance of prevailing—always on the defensive. More important than the distinction between offence and defence, in my view, is the fact that modern technology (with its accuracy and capacity for gathering and using information whether strategically or during the actual flight of a weapon) is a technology of "intended effects." This is particularly important in an age of potential catastrophe and therefore of deterrence and the need above all for controlled action.

Just as, at the level of international politics, the

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strains and dangers of the modern age suggest the wisdom of a flexible and "manipulative" approach, so on the battlefield the agile frustration of the enemy by seeking out his vulnerabilities and selectively depriving him of the ability to achieve his ends seems preferable to a mere quantitative slugging match. One would thus like to see money spent on procuring equipment which would be justified for precisely defined capabilities against enemy operations rather than (as all too often seems the case) on what some branch of the armed forces sees as the next model of what it has always been used to having.

To do this requires more flexibility on the part of both the military and the anti-military—for the peace movement's blanket opposition to innovation is a conservatism potentially no less dangerous than the "faster-and-further" urges of the less imaginative airmen. Above all, perhaps, a "manipulative" approach to politics and strategy suggests the need for a redress of the balance in favour of "generalship" rather than "management" in strategic affairs. Years of preoccupation with "balances" has tended to make us insensitive to the frequently much more important question of how the resources are actually used in conflict.

SOME OF THIS THINKING could be extended to the only brief reference to arms control for which there is space in this article.

Arms control, like other strategic policies, should be regarded not as a uni-dimensional effort to reduce quantities or as a simplistic opposition to innovation, but as a constant attempt to control and moderate the military competition, in the direction of economy (if possible) but, above all, of limiting violence. In our benevolent age of cost-effectiveness, strategy and arms control alike should be directed towards "the economy of force."

To succeed will require a much less simplistic approach than mere "anti-nuclearism." Indeed, the nuclear weapon having been conceived, it can never henceforth be removed as an element, if only potential, in the strategic balance. To try to do so could actually be counter-productive. At the very least it is a complicated business needing careful appraisal. A "No First Use" declaration, for instance, which is often advocated in conjunction with exhortations to exploit the latest possibilities for conventional defence, might actually *reduce* the chances of doing so. For it is the dispersed and elongated disposition of Soviet forces, not quite sure that NATO does not mean its threat of "First Use," that makes Western conventional resistance practicable.

The best that arms control can hope to do is probably not to eliminate nuclear weapons but to build them into the framework of global security in safer and safer ways, so that their insulation from daily conflict does not nullify their chastening influence.

I RECOGNISE that I have devoted more time to reviewing the past and the present than to foretelling the future. While this arises more from my lack of imagination than anything else, I do believe (as I said at the outset) that this is the only possible way to sense the future possibilities, and that, indeed, the next twenty years are likely to be very similar in essence to the world we already know.

If we are wise, I believe the next two decades and the future as a whole will be characterised by increasing respect for the idea that force must always be recognised and used as a political instrument, strictly confined to uses that are politically justifiable. This approach is recommended by the preferences of democracies, by the principles of cost-effectiveness, and, above all, by the dreadful potential of nuclear weapons. Fortunately the approach is also facilitated by technical trends and by the strategic doctrines of limited war and deterrence.

It would be foolish, however, to take this notion of rationality to the point of suggesting that military power can be used to purchase security cheaply. Public opinion continually has to learn that it must pay more and secure less than it would like. It is the task of democratic leadership to persuade the public to prepare for contingencies which it would prefer to ignore and to make efforts which it would prefer to avoid.

The effort is worth making because the future is far from determined, and one of the reasons why it is difficult to predict is that we still have the opportunity to shape it to our own liking.

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*R. V. Burks*

# The Arcane Art of Kremlinology

## *Faults in the Stars, Faults in Ourselves*

THE MOST STRIKING feature of the history of Western Kremlinology since the Red Army's occupation of Eastern Europe in 1944–45 has been its inability to explain the series of unexpected and dramatic events which has shaken the Soviet *imperium* ever since—except, of course, with such delay (and so many limitations) as seriously to reduce the usefulness of the art to Western policy-makers.

Along with everyone else, Kremlinologists were baffled by the Cominform excommunication of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1948, by Khrushchev's "secret" speech denouncing Stalin as a bloody tyrant in 1956, and by the Chinese "Great Leap Forward" of 1958. Few Kremlinologists anticipated or expected the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948, the North Korean attack on South Korea in 1950, the Hungarian uprising of 1956, the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the overthrow of Khrushchev in 1964, or the emergence of Polish *Solidarity* in 1980. Until events themselves proved them egregiously wrong, the majority of Kremlinologists did not regard the Sino-Soviet quarrel as a serious matter (some argued that it had been "contrived"). Our Communism-pundits were also slow in recognising the existence of national deviation in Albania and Romania.

Is *"Kremlinology" an art or a science, more related to astronomy or to astrology? Is it a tool for understanding the long Cold War against an alien non-Communist world, conducted by the Kremlin leadership since Lenin and Stalin . . . or is it a "part of the problem" of a dangerous international civil war?*

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To be sure, we now enjoy the advantage of hindsight. Much research and not a few defectors have over the years greatly improved our understanding. The participants in the great American Civil War surely did not understand that event as we now do. And despite the availability of scientific public-opinion polls it is not always easy nowadays to forecast the outcome of a British election.

Western students of Communist-bloc affairs must face up to all these difficulties; but, in addition, they have to surmount a number of special obstacles to understanding which are peculiar to their field of interest. First and foremost, they must somehow cope with the pall of secrecy in which the Communist régimes deliberately envelop themselves and the societies they govern. This passion for concealment is, of course, part of the conspiratorial revolutionary tradition. But it is directed not only at the "capitalist enemy"; it is also, in my view, an instrument of domestic control, preventing the governed from taking personal measures of evasion in the face, say, of an impending revaluation of the currency or a dispersal of office workers from the capital city. The secretive nature of the régime is father to the art of Kremlinology. *Nolens volens*, the Western observer must base his interpretation of events in the Communist countries on such apparent trivia as the conventional order of precedence among Communist leaders or the shifting verbiage of official Party doctrine. It is, perhaps, worth noting that young historians trained on the medieval period of West European history seem, because of the sparse and disparate nature of the evidence with which they have learned to work, to make better-than-average Kremlinologists.[1]

It would, of course, be unwise to dismiss scarce evidence because it appeared trivial or was of many and diverse kinds. Physicists can estimate

[1] It is, in the Kremlinological phrase, "no accident, comrades" that one of the famous practitioners of the "arcane art"—Franz Borkenau (1900–1957)—was the author of a book on *The Transition from the Feudal to the Bourgeois World* (1926). On Borkenau, see Richard Lowenthal box, p. 27.



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the half-life of the proton from a single spark emitted in the bowels of Mont Blanc. This is possible because physicists have developed a greatly detailed and demonstrably systematic understanding of the nature of sub-atomic matter; whereas historians and political scientists possess only some general and rather divergent notions about the inner nature of Communist régimes.

While the obstacles in the way of understanding the workings of European Communist societies are substantial (and far greater than those involved in working with non-Communist European states), they are still not great enough to account for the rather abysmal record of Kremlinology over the past four decades or so. The Communist veil of secrecy, while a serious obstacle, is not the real problem. That lies in the inadequacy of our underlying model of European Communist systems, or, rather, in the fact that there exist two more-or-less surreptitious and conflicting models. The first (the more traditional) casts Communist régimes in a "totalitarian" mould, incapable of peaceful devolution and inherently dangerous to the rest of the world unless destroyed. The other (the more recent) argues that Communist régimes are becoming "authoritarian" in nature and are capable, if given time and some Western financial help, of essentially peaceful if sometimes dramatic evolution in a pluralist direction.[2]

LIKE MANY OTHERS, I have tried to improve my understanding of the European Communist polities by working out a model of my own, or, to use Max Weber's concept, an "ideal type", formulating—if only as hypotheses—rules of being which appear to govern the behaviour of the European Communist states. In the construction of my model I specifically include the USSR, not only because events in Eastern Europe, strictly speaking, cannot usually be explained without reference to Moscow, but also because the USSR is the "superpower version" of the European Communist régime. Let me, therefore, put forward a set of six working hypotheses and attempt to illustrate each of them by reference to some of the surprises which have overtaken, perplexed, or embarrassed our Kremlinologists since 1945.

**1.** *The Number One problem faced by all régimes is the retention of control; all other matters are of secondary importance.*

Under Communism the mass of the population is not only excluded from any voice in the decision-making process but is viewed by decision-makers as simply one resource among the many others available for the realisation of the immediate régime objective—which is the maximisation of state power. What other government, beginning with a backward agrarian economy, acquires both the capital and the manpower with which to build modern industry by wrenching from the peasant majority its tiny holdings, restoring and mechanising the great estates, and reducing those who remain on the land to helotry—all this by systematic and ruthless use of police power? Is it any wonder that the typical régime lacks legitimacy in the eyes of those it governs? Or that even among what Milovan Djilas called "the New Class" there persists widespread (if secret) doubts as to the wisdom and the morality of the whole Communist enterprise?

The combination of an indifferent, and even a hostile, work force and a ruling élite (large sections of which are prepared to defect if an opportunity should present itself, or even if it does not) renders the typical régime subject to collapse—as in the Hungary of 1956—or to sudden and precipitous transmutation—as in the Czechoslovakia of 1968—or to the unexpected emergence of an opposition political party—as in the Poland of 1980. What is more (and in this I am sure I represent a distinctly minority view), the collapse or the transmutation of one régime, or the birth of an opposition political party, constitutes a threat to the internal stability of all the other régimes. Let me illustrate.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1968, Western specialists were virtually unanimous in rejecting the possibility of a Soviet military occupation of Czechoslovakia.[3] Prague had repeatedly proclaimed its loyalty to the Warsaw Pact and carefully avoided all reference to the touchy subject of free elections. In this fashion it thought to avoid the two mistakes which (in the Western exegesis) had triggered Soviet intervention in Hungary twelve years earlier. Western observers were, moreover, inclined to

[2] In my article on "The Thaw and the Future of Eastern Europe", ENCOUNTER (August, 1964, pp. 24–32), I argued that the régimes were in process of evolving from totalitarian to authoritarian status. Twenty years later, as the present sequel will show, I have tended to move in the opposite direction, although I am far from holding that "destruction" is an acceptable or necessary solution.

[3] I have in mind a specific case: a conference of eminent specialists in Soviet and East European studies, 28 in number, meeting at Stanford University in August 1968, under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies. After a lively discussion, the following proposition was put to a vote:

> "there exists a strong probability that, unless the Czech reformers restore the censorship and take other measures to restore central control, their country will *be occupied by the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact.*"

Only two of the specialists present voted in the affirmative.

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accept the defence which the Czech reformers put to their Soviet and East German critics, namely that something called "one-party pluralism" would in the end be the salvation of the Soviet system.

It was at the same time true, however, that the events in Czechoslovakia produced rioting in East German cities, blocked an impending change of government in Poland, and caused the First Secretaries of the Party in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Soviet Moldavia and the Ukraine (particularly the latter) to press for immediate occupation of the deviant republic. Political pluralism in any form is, arguably, not compatible with the dictatorship of the proletariat, nor with the careers (or even the physical safety) of Communist élites—many of whom have blood on their hands—nor yet with central planning, the priority of heavy industry, or the collectivisation of agriculture. This incompatibility is the true meaning, as I see it, of the "Brezhnev doctrine."

This was in fact a doctrine regularly enforced long before it was ever formulated. As early as 1948 the Communist decision-makers were unwilling to tolerate in post-War Czechoslovakia a multiparty coalition government (even one which the Communists dominated), which was not subject to criticism in a free press and was prepared to conform entirely to the requirements of Soviet foreign policy. The seizure of power in February 1948 finally convinced the Western intellectuals of that generation that there was no living with the Soviets, who were so obviously unwilling or unable to compromise. For that reason, as it seems to me, the Czech coup marked the true beginning of the Cold War.

The domino effect which results from the fragility of the Communist system helps explain another peculiarity of the Soviet *imperium*, namely its inability to accept the loss of any régime. This is why the Soviet government continues to pour $3m a day, primarily in the form of oil deliveries, into a nearly prostrate Cuban economy. It also helps account for the attempt to occupy Afghanistan, after the Kremlin had unwisely advised the Kabul Communists to seize power. As the *KGB* defector Vladimir Kuzichkin is reported to have said, if the Soviets were to be thrown out of Afghanistan the wider effects of the blow to Soviet prestige would be unpredictable and "the Soviet Union could not run such a risk. . . ."[4]

2. *Because of this political fragility, the ruling Communist Party finds that it has given hostages to the practitioners of force: the Police and the Military.*

The régime must depend for its existence on the security police which, in case of need, has to be backed up by the Army. With its malcontent and even embittered populations, and above all its partially disaffected élite, only the loyalty and discipline of the men-at-arms can prevent Humpty-Dumpty falling off the wall. In exchange for this service, army and police come to enjoy first priority, making the régime itself a police state, and the social order a military-industrial complex. The power of compulsion that is projected inward by the police and the army is, of course, also automatically propelled outward as a potential for destruction, thus maintaining, at one and the same time, its national credibility at home and that level of international tension which the rulers find internally stabilising.

Khrushchev's tempestuous career is, in my view, to be understood as an attempt to reduce the priority of the military. This was not a matter of sentiment or humanitarianism on his part—after all he had defended the existing priorities in order to defeat Malenkov—but rather of his emerging perception that, given the decision to govern without systematic use of terror, the Soviet polity would soon find itself in serious economic trouble if material incentives were not available in substantially larger dosages than before. The First Secretary also expected that a change in priorities would weaken the position of the military-industrial complex (i.e. the "steel-eaters") and give him and his Party apparatus the decisive grip on power which had so far eluded them.

The "secret speech" of February 1956 marked the beginning of Khrushchev's campaign. Public confession of the horrors of tyranny constituted an open break with the bloody past. The counter-blow of the Moscow opposition (delivered in July 1957) fell short, and led instead to the purge of those whom the First Secretary called the "anti-Party group." At the same time Nikita Sergeyevich began to propound the doctrine that, as between East and West, the balance of military power had already begun to shift, a fact that the Capitalists would sooner or later be forced to recognise by surrendering key strategic positions rather than run the risk of nuclear holocaust. The First Secretary was able to release 1.2m officers and men from the conventional forces, roughly a third of the military establishment, and return them to civilian life. But he proved unable either to replace the steel with the chemical industry as the demiurge of the régime or to persuade the military to confide the defence of the country primarily to nuclear weapons.

IF FURTHER PROGRESS were to be made with the

[4] "Coups and Killings in Kabul: A KGB Defector Tells How Afghanistan Became Brezhnev's Vietnam", *Time* (22 November 1982), pp. 33–34.

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shift in priorities, an actual demonstration of the new doctrine was clearly required. So in 1962 Khrushchev attempted to trade IRBMs, secretly emplaced in Castro's Cuba, against the Western presence in Berlin. The humiliating failure of this effort led him, his position now very much weakened, to project a visit to West Germany, perhaps in the hope of negotiating some kind of deal covering West Berlin and the *DDR*, so as to convince his colleagues that further reduction of the military budget was feasible. His son-in-law arrived in Bonn to prepare the way. Khrushchev was removed from office before he could undertake the journey.

3. *Soviet-style centrally planned economies (CPE) cannot compete in market terms with advanced industrial economies, and this seriously limits the long-run ability of Communist states to achieve genuine as distinct from superimposed stability.*

Socialist manufactured goods possess neither the quality, the variety, nor the service back-up sufficient to make their export to the world market a profitable undertaking. This weakness is due in good part to the persistence of a technological gap between East and West. CPEs typically suffer from low rates of technological innovation. Thus, Communists not only introduce modern industry at the cost of deliberately lowering living standards but, in order to maintain the growth of that industry, they must export on disadvantageous terms and hence at the continuing cost of popular consumption. It is not going too far to assert that the Socialist economies have not yet achieved "take-off", i.e. self-reproducing dynamic growth, and consequently remain dependent on foreign sources for improved technology.

In theory the CPE can be replaced with something approximating to a "socialist market", thus raising Communist economies to a competitive level; but in practice this has proved to be difficult. Brief consideration will convince the reader that a market is the very essence of pluralism, and its introduction in any real form under Communism tends to loosen up both the régime and the society. An attempt to "marketise" the Czech economy turned out to be the catalyst of the 1968 Prague thaw.

Yugoslav marketisation (which the Czechs were attempting to imitate) had begun in 1966 after severe factional in-fighting; and was itself an attempt to offset the centripetal impact of the reforms of 1952, which transferred much of the investment authority of Belgrade's central ministries to local Communist hierarchs. One outcome of the 1952 reform had been the emergence of parties in the Republic as decision-making centres in competition with the mother body: in other words, a partial pluralisation of the polity. This produced a dangerous autocratic trend—an expensive duplication of industrial facilities and infrastructure, Republic by Republic. Take ports, for example. Not only was there the Belgrade-to-Bar railway, per mile the most expensive in the world, but also the construction of a harbour in Slovenia, at Koper, and preparations for a Bosnian haven at Ploče, together with an upgrading of Danubian facilities at Smederovo, Zemun, and Novi Sad.

Tito's market reform of 1966 was an effort to discourage such duplication by subjecting it to the cold wind of competition, the cleansing power of which (it was believed) would give Croatian Rijeka its rightful place as Federal Yugoslavia's major seaport. Yet the marketising reform of 1966 in time inconveniently gave rise to a separatist movement in Croatia—an outcome that concerned observers in Moscow could not have missed. Indeed, the Croatian crisis caused Marshal Tito to spin the wheel hard left, and in his last years he attempted to rebuild the power and refurbish the prestige of the "mother Party." The largely Serbian-officered Yugoslav People's Army, with which Tito had threatened to occupy the separation-prone Republic, was given formal representation in the higher Party bodies. Moreover, the various parliaments were no longer elected directly by the voters but higher bodies were henceforth made up of delegations from lower ones. Belgrade, however, could not muster the courage to dismantle the "political" factories which had been built in the backward south, leaving the market reform in a state of, more or less, suspended animation.

THESE THREE HYPOTHESES—that Communist leaders must everywhere and always be primarily concerned with the retention of control; that in order to remain in place the régimes must transform themselves and their countries in the image of the army and the security police; and that the inefficiency of the centrally planned economy constitutes a primary obstacle to the achievement of organic as distinct from imposed stability—comprise the central core of my "ideal type." They are related to and underlie three further hypotheses of perhaps lesser importance, namely: that all Communist politics tend to be factional in character; that, although the jury is still considering the verdict in the Hungarian and the Polish cases, it appears that although the Communist régime can slip to the verge of collapse and face some imminent instant transmutation, it is probably not capable of a gradual and peaceful evolution to something more acceptable and less dangerous to the rest of the world; finally (and in only apparent contradiction), that despite all the capital weak-

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nesses enumerated above, all Communism in power tends to become National Communism.

**4.** *All Communist politics tend to be factional in character.*

Communist régimes being inherently fragile, all decisions affecting their future are normally fraught with great risk and therefore tend to be ideologically controversial. The Party, however, does not in fact possess a mechanism for the expression of disagreement, even if it does so in theory. The notion of a loyal opposition—without which open and frank debate is not in the long run possible—is alien to the Communist (and even perhaps the whole revolutionary) tradition. Therefore, behind an exterior of monolithic unity we may expect to find an interior of covert factional struggle. The broad nature of these factional disputes can be inferred by reference to the various obvious policy problems facing the régime, the vested interests of the various hierarchies, the provincial origins of the different leaders, and so on.

Such factions, moreover, reflect not only the organisation of state power as a set of conflicting hierarchies but also the fact that, in general, Communism prevails where the rule of law is an aspiration still poorly understood and where, therefore, the security of the individual is to be found not in the courts nor at the polls nor yet in commercial insurance, but instead in the family tie, the solidarity of the village, or the dependent loyalties of a "clientele." In this matter the revelations of Albanian factionalism appear to provide us with a dramatic and revealing case at the margin.

AFTER 1945 STALIN appears to have made deliberate use of factionalism to maintain his supreme personal authority. Needing an heir apparent because of his advancing years, the great Kremlin dictator arranged to have two crown princes, each representing a policy alternative and neither being permitted a following greater than that of his arch-rival. Thus Stalin avoided becoming the prisoner of a dominant faction. He also reduced the risk of assassination. This dualism can explain the two divergent Communist policies towards post-War Greece: the official, which recognised Greece as belonging to "the British sphere of influence"; and the unofficial, which allowed Tito and his Partisans to plunge Greece into civil war in the hope of adding that country (and even perhaps the Straits) to the Communist holdings.

Malenkov and Zhdanov were the two heirs chosen by the ageing dictator: the one an advocate of moderation (based on the assumption that "world capitalism" had, for the second time, entered a period of temporary stabilisation); the other the proponent of a new Communist offensive destined to deliver the last decisive blow to a "tottering imperialism." When Zhdanov was ruined by the undisciplined behaviour of his ally Tito, Malenkov was permitted to purge Zhdanov's Leningrad stronghold; at the same time Khrushchev was called from the Ukraine to function as the second *diadochos*. When Stalin died, there was no one to decide among the contending heirs; and this explains, for example, the post-Stalin struggle in Hungary, when Imre Nagy (backed by the state bureaucracy and the régime's writers) squared off against Mátyás Rákosi (who was supported by the security police and the party apparatus). The factional conflict between Nagy and Rákosi prepared the way for the Hungarian flash-rising of 1956.

It is worth noting that Khrushchev managed to appoint only a single crown prince: first, Frol Kozlov (who nearly overthrew him in April 1963) and then Leonid Brezhnev (who became the beneficiary of the conspiracy of October 1964). Khrushchev's power was never the equivalent of Stalin's, because he was unable to destroy his opponents physically. That kind of power had disappeared with the abandonment of systematic political terror, and the consequent transfer of the control of the security police from the hands of the First Secretary to those of the Politburo majority. Even so, Khrushchev was powerful enough to give the system a good shaking.

I HAVE noted that Khrushchev attempted to reduce the priority of the armed forces. He sought also to undercut the state bureaucracy with his *sovnarchoz* reform of 1957, dissolving many of the industrial ministries and transferring much of the management of industry to the Republics and *oblasts* so that it could be dominated by local Party appointees. Furthermore, the First Secretary attempted to improve the work of the Party apparatus itself; he provided important elements with additional academic training, introduced regular rotation of leading cadres, and arranged an early retirement for the ineffective. When the new personnel policy did not produce the hoped-for results, Khrushchev divided the apparatus into two parts, increasing its total personnel; he placed one hierarchy in charge of industry, gave the other supervision over agriculture, and charged both with day-to-day responsibility in their respective spheres—in the hope, no doubt, of improving their collective talents.

The Party—not to mention the state bureaucracy—felt itself much put upon; and most of Khrushchev's reforms were sooner or later thwarted or undone. Interestingly enough, his suc-

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cessor turned out to have less decision-making power than Khrushchev. In contrast to the beliefs of his former mentor, Brezhnev adopted the view that there was nothing wrong with the Soviet system that a little fine-tuning would not take care of. This approach permitted him to function as a "chairman of the board", casting the deciding ballot, as in the case of the military occupation of Czechoslovakia, or negotiating a consensus among the various factions on specific issues.

The sequel has shown the peasant from Kalinovka to have been profoundly right, which is not to say that his specific remedies for the ills of the Soviet system would necessarily have worked. But it does mean that Brezhnev's successor, in addition to being a short-timer for reasons of age and health, probably possesses even less power with which to tackle the domestic problems that now bedevil the Soviet régime. During the 30 years which have elapsed since the First Secretary ceased to give orders to the security police, the various hierarchies which serve as the constituent elements of Soviet government—the Party apparatus, the state bureaucracy, the security police and the military—have each apparently acquired a veto power. This will in future make any decision for radical reform difficult indeed to achieve, and certainly not without a renewed outbreak of more or less open factional warfare.

5. *It seems that while a European Communist régime may collapse, or undergo instant transmutation, it cannot peacefully or gradually replace its totalitarian immobilism with an authoritarianism that is capable of compromise.*

The primary obstacle to an evolutionary development appears to be the degree of coercion which must be regularly employed to keep the régime in place (even after the systematic use of terror has been abandoned and, in some part, replaced with material incentives). Any significant relaxation of this pressure appears in itself to be capable of precipitating (*1*) large-scale defection among the ruling intelligentsia, (*2*) an outburst of minority national feeling, or (*3*) widespread popular disorders—or some combination of the three, particularly if the relaxation is conjoined with an improvement in living standards. The cases of the East German *DDR* (1953), Hungary and Poland (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), Yugoslavia (1971), and Poland (1980) appear to me to constitute proof of these propositions, at least in so far as they apply to the USSR's satellites. The great concern which Soviet authority manifests for dissident activities within the USSR, despite the minuscule number of identifiable dissidents, together with the inability of the Kremlin to tolerate any real sign of overt pluralism in any part of the *imperium*, points in the same dismal direction.

The principal evidence running counter to my fifth hypothesis is to be found in Hungary and in Poland. The Hungarian régime has honeycombed its collective farms with material incentives, and is producing the only flourishing agriculture under Communism. Moreover, the administration of industry is gradually being decentralised, while the enterprises themselves are slowly being subjected to the competitive impact of the world markets. Food subsidies no longer play an important role in the price structure. The Hungarian economy has its troubles, to be sure (a very sizable hard-currency debt, for example), but Western bankers continue to give the country a good credit rating. Some Soviet leaders (in particular the youngest member of the Politburo and the secretariat, Mikhail Gorbachev) have even begun to cite "the Hungarian experiment" as worth close study.

Even so, the Hungarian experience may be misleading, in the sense of constituting the exception that proves the rule. To begin with, there is the very difficult Uguro-Finnish language, which is not generally understood in the neighbouring East European countries; so that the Hungarian experiment has been rather less destabilising to its fellow régimes than if it had been, so to speak, Slavic-speaking. Then there is the matter of ethnic unity. Some 95% of the population is Magyar, and 20% live in the capital city, so that the danger of separatistic provincialism and even secessionism (which has loomed so large in Yugoslavia as a consequence of market reform) is virtually non-existent. Of perhaps equal importance has been the special role played by János Kádár: the Soviets appear to trust him implicitly, as a reliable Communist; and at the same time the population seems to regard him as a good and loyal Hungarian. About no other Communist leader in Eastern Europe can such claims be made. I have heard it said that Kádár is perhaps the greatest Hungarian statesman since Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490). . . .

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL in explaining the Hungarian exception is the trauma of 4-14 November 1956, when the embattled Magyars could not really bring themselves to believe that the United States, led by General Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, would not come to their rescue. Once the illusory character of this unconscious article of faith became clear to the population, the Magyar world-outlook underwent a drastic and permanent change. Instead of thinking of themselves as an "imperial people" wrongly deprived of a great empire, a worthy nation which could look to the American superpower for natural sponsorship (as it had once looked to the German Third

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Reich), the Magyars now saw themselves as a small, isolated folk, wanting in natural resources, without defensible frontiers, surrounded by nations who had reason to hate and distrust them. (To some of these nations, moreover, history had entrusted the care and keeping of physically isolated but numerically significant Magyar minorities.) A people reborn to such an impoverished heritage had perforce to accommodate, accept, make do—and to produce, in a kind of desperate sublimation, the phenomenon of Kádár's Hungary.

THE POLISH CASE is very different. Where Kádár's Hungary inches along in institutional evolution, always mindful of Russian political paranoia, Communist Poland lurches defiantly from crisis to crisis, now and again achieving a quantum leap toward a pluralist society.

The first such leap took place during the first crisis of the régime's installation—when it was decided to postpone indefinitely the collectivisation of Polish agriculture (even though collectivisation was obligatory elsewhere under Socialism). This decision was based in part on the great feebleness of the new post-War régime, by far the weakest of any in Eastern Europe, but probably resulted to a greater extent from the Soviet perception of the Poles as "crazy, unpredictable men", traditionally liable to engage in unexpected insurgence even against hopeless odds. The Soviet reaction was most immediately due to the great embarrassment caused to the Kremlin by the Warsaw Rising of August and September 1944—a hopeless undertaking if ever there was one. Resistance belongs to their tragic history. In any case, the effect of the decision was to leave the Poles their private agriculture, unproductive and even archaic, but still an area of autonomy and self-reliance. Today, 78% of Polish arable land is still privately farmed.

The great Polish crisis of 1956 brought with it two important improvements. One was the recognition of the restored First Secretary, Wladyslaw Gomulka, that the country could not be governed without a minimum of cooperation from the Polish Catholic Church. It was hard to avoid the historic fact that the Catholic Church and the Polish nation constituted in some ways a single entity, and that a *modus vivendi* between Church and State therefore had to be worked out. From Gomulka's time, Poland had in fact two governments: one, imposed from abroad, the expression of an alien (if secular) religion, but possessed of all hard political power; the other, indigenous and traditional but vested with genuine spiritual authority. The virtues of this arrangement have recently been demonstrated in the negotiations between Archbishop Glemp and General Wojciech Jaruzelski over the official termination of martial law.

A SECOND GAIN in 1956 was the cessation of the jamming of foreign radio broadcasts (particularly those of Radio Free Europe from Munich). At the peak of the crisis, mobs destroyed the jamming installations located in cities throughout the country; and the Warsaw régime never mustered enough courage to rebuild them. Without the effective "ground-wave" jammers, the expense of the much more easily defeated "sky-wave" jamming from Soviet transmitters seemed too costly; and this type of electronic disturbance also disappeared. The result was to give the Poles the short-wave equivalent of a free press. The exiles at Radio Free Europe in Munich—as a group, in my view, easily the most talented of radio broadcasting units—were on the air more than 20 hours each day. (Their broadcast time was roughly three-quarters of the total time provided by all Western transmitters.) The emphasis of the RFE broadcasts was on news: domestic Polish news (derived primarily from research in the Polish press but also from the reportage of Western correspondents who visited the country) and news of world affairs. Editorial policy was admittedly guided by intermittent contact with the office of the Polish Primate.

Thus, from 1956 on, Poles were better informed of what was happening at home and abroad than any other population living under Communism (I except the Yugoslavs and must note that the Romanian and Hungarian governments also decided to put an end to the jamming of foreign broadcasts).

THE NEXT GERMINAL CRISIS began in 1980 with the birth of *Solidarity*, and still continues. Initially the issue was whether the Poles would be permitted to have what amounted to an opposition political party, masquerading as a free labour union. For *Solidarity*'s demands were more political than economic in character, and the ultimate objective of the trade union and its leadership was to share the government of the country with the *PZPR*, the Polish United Workers (or Communist) Party. This demand was, of course, unacceptable to the Kremlin which was by no means prepared to negotiate the dissolution of its East European empire. The intermediate outcome was the introduction of military government by the Polish army (until then the second most popular institution after the Church, according to unofficial public-opinion polls). "Martial law" was a substitute for military occupation of the country

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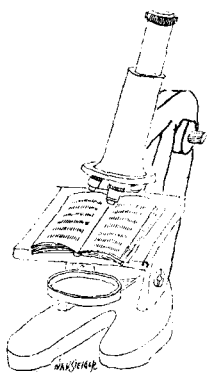
by the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact, for many months mobilised in readiness along Poland's borders. Most observers are convinced that the intrusion of these forces would have produced a new Polish insurrection.

After a year of martial law, during which the ZOMOS (the special riot-units of the security police) continued to "restore order" under the ostensible protection of an army whose morale had begun to suffer, and with Leonid Brezhnev replaced by Yuri Andropov as general secretary of the CPSU, the Polish Primate managed to arrange for new negotiations, between the newly released *Solidarity* chieftain Lech Walesa, General Jaruzelski, and the Archbishop himself. Now the issue was whether, in exchange for the cooperation of *Solidarity* in getting the Polish economy moving again, the workers would be permitted a strictly labour union of their own, with an ultimate, but not an immediate, right to strike.

It was high time. The economy was functioning at 60% capacity, and increased production depended heavily on renewed ability to import parts and raw materials from the West (where creditors were refusing additional loans until martial law was lifted). Bread was rationed; meat was rationed and difficult to find; matches and soap were almost unobtainable; and the coal ration for home heating was less than it had been during the Nazi-German occupation 40 years earlier. The workers would have to be persuaded to return to the six-day week (already operative in the coal mines) and to accept with some good grace the 25% drop in living standards that had already taken place.

Thus, by 1983, the Poles had, in one way or another, achieved a partially pluralised society. Alone within the Soviet *imperium* they still possessed a private agriculture and a self-governing Church. And they were negotiating, in a confrontation that frequently took to the streets, some sort of free labour-union organisation. The larger

## *On Franz Borkenau*



THE REMARK *made by R. V. Burks about the value of "medieval studies" for the Kremlinologist is a reminder that one of the greatest practitioners of the "arcane art", Franz Borkenau (1900–1957), published his first book on the subject of the "transition from the feudal to the bourgeois world." When the history of Kremlinology is written, the much-neglected Borkenau will receive recognition as one of the founding fathers. The following is excerpted from the prefatory pages by Richard Lowenthal (himself no mean "arcane" practitioner) to a collection of Franz Borkenau's historical-cultural essays called "End & Beginning" (Columbia University Press, 1981).*

"I MET HIM **first in 1926, when I was an 18-year-old freshman at Berlin University and had just entered the German Communist party. He was then national leader of the German Communist students and worked at the same time in an international research section of Comintern, which gave him an unusually wide international horizon. I became his political pupil and later his successor as student leader; but by the end of 1929 we, together with several friends, broke with the Communist party, refusing to accept a policy which treated the Social Democrats as the "main enemy" while the Nazi danger was rising.**

**In later years our ways often separated both geographically and politically. I eventually became an active Social Democrat; he never joined a party again. But we remained friends, in wartime England and again in postwar Germany, and his immensely creative and original mind always remained a vital source of inspiration for me, whether I agreed with him or not. In the last decade of his life, he often spoke to me about the problems treated in this book—problems that were then in the center of his interest; and gradually, thinking in terms of a plurality of cultures became for me, too, a key to the understanding of history.**

DURING *the last decade of his life, he divided his time between the study of current developments in the Soviet Union and the Communist world movement, and his work on the theory and history of civilizations. The reputation established by his pre-war book on "The Communist International" and the keenness of his observation and analysis of new developments in this field assured him a living—for two years as editor on "Ost-Probleme," later as an international freelance and as author of a new book on "European Communism" (1953). This book, dealing in the main with Communist history from the pre-war Popular Front period through the war years and the crisis of liberation to the practice of the new "Communist Information Bureau" (Cominform), founded in 1947, was written with less detachment and in parts also with less care than his 1938 book: critics complained about inaccuracies of detail and above all about excessive speculation.*

*But this speculation on the background of Soviet and Communist policy during the late Stalinist period sprang from what was, on the other hand, a real merit of the book: an early attempt to interpret the policy of a totalitarian regime, in this case the late period of Stalin's rule, not as "monolithic" but as characterized by persistent personal and political rivalries behind the scenes, which could be inferred from the interpretation of what later came to be called "esoteric communications" in official Communist statements."*

*Richard Lowenthal*

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question remains: can the Soviet leadership tolerate any kind of union with the legal right to strike anywhere where runs the Communist writ?

MY FIRST INCLINATION is to answer the question in the negative. In the long run, a free Polish trade union would probably be followed by Ukrainian and East German equivalents, and this degree of pluralism might well signify the beginning of the end of Moscow's Bolshevik empire.

On the other hand, it is possible that in their present circumstances the Soviets may feel they have no choice but to risk a "Polish experiment." There are 36 million Poles; except for Great Russians and Ukrainians, the Poles are the most numerous European population living under Soviet-style Socialism. Moreover, the Poles live athwart Moscow's line of communications with the 19 Soviet divisions stationed in the East German *DDR*, where they assure the continued division of Germany and create the most palpable threat against NATO. As long as the Polish crisis continues the Polish army will remain *hors de combat*, dispersed throughout the country to serve as a protective presence for the operations of the ZOMOS in the city streets, doubling as shock workers in the Silesian mines or, as officer commissars, supervising the work of factories. It is simply too early yet to foresee the outcome of the *Solidarity* crisis. Perhaps it could represent a form of semi-peaceful, long-range evolution; but, on the whole, I think not.

6. *All Communism in power tends to become National Communism.*

Although standing in apparent contradiction to its predecessors, this hypothesis owes its validity to the fact that the machinery of state is itself a bureaucratic and military response over time to the imperatives of power, whether geographic, economic, or cultural. In some part, "national interest" is another name for the needs of the state machine and of the people who operate it. And a nationally-oriented policy can also be of use in reducing both élite dissidence and popular opposition.

No doubt the most dramatic illustration of this sixth hypothesis is provided by the Romanian national deviation. The deviation probably had its origin in the Romanian CC plenum of November 1958, and was first recognised in the West, I think, by Radio Free Europe, although only in March 1963. This delayed recognition is attributable to a number of factors.

In the first place, Western specialists failed to recognise the metamorphosis which the Romanian Party underwent as the result of being catapulted into power. When the Romanians changed sides in August 1944, Party members were probably less than a thousand in number. Of these, perhaps half were Hungarian, and most of the remainder were Jewish, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian. Clearly, it was not possible to govern some 16 million Romanians with a tiny and discredited band of ethnic non-Romanians. A much larger membership had to be enlisted, and the leadership was not choosy: former Iron Guardists were given safe haven in large numbers, and the Tudor Vladimirescu Division (which had been formed from Romanian prisoners-of-war held in the USSR) was enrolled *en masse*.

Since most of the new comrades had never read Marx, Engels, Lenin or Stalin prior to their recruitment, it was imperative to subject the membership to some formal and political schooling. Some 249,000 were enrolled in *ad hoc* educational institutions during 1949–50, and an additional 324,000 in 1950–51 (more than 90% of the total membership at that date). The lesson that the new membership learned, whether from their formal studies or not, was that the true meaning of Marxism-Leninism was to be found in its programme of forced-draft industrialisation. Interest in modern industry and more generally in "modernisation" became the glue which held the Party together and made the régime function vigorously—especially when it turned out that Khrushchev and the Soviet bureaucrats wished to limit Romanian industrialisation to petrochemicals, synthetic fertilisers, and food-processing, which the Romanians naturally saw as an effort to keep their country both poor and backward.

In the second place, Western specialists generally underestimated the bitterness and intensity of the Sino-Soviet quarrel. They therefore miscalculated the extent to which other Socialist states could profit from it—now that there was an alternative great-power Communist sponsor whose ideological stance would not threaten the internal stability of the client régime. Western specialists failed in particular to note that, while all Soviet troops had left Romania by July 1958, all Chinese troops had departed from Korea by October of that same year—evidently as the result of a trade-off negotiated between Peking and Moscow.

Finally, Western observers did not altogether understand that a deviant East European régime, once the Sino-Soviet schism had taken place, could go quite far in defying the Soviet patron so long as its deviations were "to the left", and accordingly did not imperil the domestic stability of its Socialist neighbours by exerting a mass-popular appeal. The recent rapid decline in the output of the oil fields at Ploiesti has caused Bucharest to become more compliant in its deal-

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ings with Moscow; but this should not be allowed to obscure the importance of the Romanian deviation in the 1960s and '70s.

THE ROMANIAN CASE is only the most extreme example. The most important is the USSR itself—for what was "Socialism-in-one-country" if not the first and the most important of the national deviations, concentrating the effort of the Soviet peoples on the problem of maximising state power, mainly for Great-Russian purposes? And the most curious case is, surely, that of the East German Democratic Republic, which this year will celebrate with some theological dignity and cultural grandeur the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther while virtually ignoring the centenary of the death of Karl Marx. Ideologues always come to praise famous men, and the names and faces appear to be interchangeable.

IF MY ARGUMENT, as I hope, more or less unveils the inner structure of the European Communist polity, it becomes clearer why, over the past 39 years, Kremlinology has been both so controversial and so poor in predictive power... why, indeed, it remains an arcane art and has yet to become some kind of established sub-discipline. The time lapse in the Kremlinological learning process is much too great. Virtually no one foresaw, even as late as 1978, the grave domestic difficulties in which the Soviet government has since found itself; nor is there even now much serious analysis, or even speculation, as to whether or not these difficulties could produce a systemic breakdown in the USSR during the present decade.[5]

It is perhaps worthwhile to speculate on the constraints that may be responsible for this situation, and in particular the failure to develop a more detailed and generally acceptable model of the Communist state.

The constraints are, in part, professional. A large proportion of those with specialised interests in the "Kremlin" field is employed by government agencies. As in any bureaucracy, the interest of an underling does not lie in bringing "bad news" to his superior, especially if it is likely to have a negative impact on his boss's budget. This tendency is reinforced by the proclivity of the military to plan within the framework of a "worst-case" scenario.

In Washington, I must note, an effort was made to counteract this trend by setting up within the Central Intelligence Agency an "Office of National Estimates" (ONE). It was a bureau designed to produce official positions on major intelligence issues (in collaboration with the appropriate divisions of the various armed forces but under the supervision and control of the Director of Central Intelligence). During much of the war in Viet Nam, ONE persisted in estimating ultimate defeat for the American forces. It insisted, for example, that the available evidence showed that the Viet Cong were much more numerous than the US command believed. As a consequence, ONE was deprived of most of its expert personnel and in effect subordinated to the military by President Richard Nixon; he thought such estimates smacked of disloyalty. (More recently there has been an attempt to rebuild ONE.)

There are also what one might call "situational" constraints, which are more subtle and pervasive than the professional limitations. These appear in most sharply defined form in North America. Here, historically, the degree of military security and the per-capita income have been the highest in the world. It is difficult for Americans and Canadians to understand that their situation in history is exceptional, if not unique—that other peoples usually live in vastly less favourable conditions, that most of the world outside is racked by tragedy, despair, and danger. In particular, North Americans have difficulty imagining a voracious government which preys on its own people for the purposes of power.

This may be one of the reasons why it is possible, as I well know, to find in the United States university professors who refuse to write letters of recommendation for students applying for employment with the Federal government—because that government engages in "espionage... sabotage... guerrilla warfare...." These alienated attitudes also partially explain why public advocacy of conscription would amount to political suicide for any American politician with national ambitions (even though America's inferiority in conventional forces makes US employment of nuclear weapons more likely in the event of Soviet conventional attack.) More immediately germane is the presence of scholars who argue that the government in Washington was primarily responsible for "bringing on the Cold War" (by dropping nuclear devices on two Japanese cities, after Tokyo was already prepared to surrender, in order to intimidate the men in the Kremlin, etc. etc.). In my view the prevalence of such attitudes helps to explain why funding for "Russian area studies" has tended to dry up, so that there now exists the danger that in another generation Sovietologists and East Europeanists will be in very short supply.

Progress in understanding the nature and the

[5] See Robert F. Byrnes (ed.), *After Brezhnev: Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s*, a collective work sponsored by Georgetown University and scheduled to appear at the Indiana University Press in May.

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behaviour patterns of the European Communist polity in general, and at the policy-making level in particular has been fitful and scattered.[6] More recently, however, new and encouraging indications of a better Kremlinological future have appeared. The US Department of Defense now gives each year to a senior group of private scholars, known collectively as the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, a sum of several hundred thousand dollars to subsidise projects of mutual interest. As an example I may cite the large-scale investigation, based primarily on the interrogation of recent immigrants, of the second Soviet economy, its size and character—a study directed by Gregory Grossman of Berkeley. Former Ambassador to the USSR Averell Harriman has (at the urging of Marshall Shulman, recently returned to Columbia from duty as Counsellor to the Department of State) donated $11 million to the Russian Institute of Columbia University to offset somewhat the expected shortage of specialists. Finally, the Reagan administration is now giving thought to the reconstitution of the CIA's Office of National Estimates as the institutionalised critic and supervisor of Pentagon evaluations of Soviet bloc strengths. Perhaps these developments point to a more realistic, less culture-bound understanding of that half-mystery called the European Communist polity.

The dangers of Soviet power will remain with us for a long time to come. We shall need to read the signs and stars thoughtfully; if we do not, the fault lies in ourselves.

[6] There have been notable contributions none the less, such as Michel Tatu, *Power in the Kremlin from Khrushchev to Kosygin* (1969) and William Hyland and Richard Wallace Shryock, *The Fall of Khrushchev* (1968). The first is the work of an outstanding Moscow correspondent, now a foreign editor of *Le Monde* in Paris; the second is the collaborative product of two former ONE staff members.

## From the Memoirs of a Sea-Captain

For twenty years I have sailed to Tarshish, traced
Invisible paths over the tumble of blue,
Hearing the slap and the stroke on the hollow hull.
I have carried every nation, even Persians,
Even the wild Iberians.
The moment he boarded
I spotted him. Shifty. When he bought his ticket
He only asked "How far?" "Are you sailing soon?"
He kept on asking, glancing ashore. So when,
Two days from Joppa, the water started to froth
I wasn't surprised. The waves stood up and spat
And pushed us over. He was asleep in the hold.
I sent the sailors to wake him: he knew at once.
"It's me", he said. "I ought to be in Nineveh.
Yahweh is angry: he'll beat at the ship with his fists,
He'll turn the ship upside down and shake us all
Into the water. You shouldn't have let me on."

Who is Yahweh? we asked. He thought that a joke.
"Yahweh is God of Israel; but he is God
Of everywhere else as well—of land and water,
And no doubt Tarshish. Throw me overboard."
We wanted to help him; we rowed; and the sea lost its temper,
Threw itself at us, and screamed. So we threw him.
We had to. After all, he had offered.
And the tumbling waters turned blue, and stopped hitting,
And a monster appeared, and swallowed him.
Yahweh, no doubt.

*Laurence Lerner*

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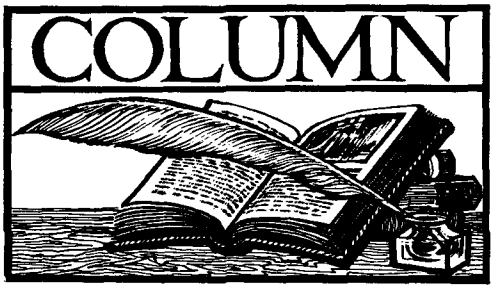


"A SCHOOLMASTER is a king amongst boys and a boy amongst men." "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." "He who cannot teach, trains teachers."

Such tart remarks—the first from Anon., the second from Bernard Shaw, and the third from me—are typical of the flak endured by educators. It's equally typical that I heard the first two of them from teachers at school. Candour, spiced with masochism, was one of their virtues; and today, years later, their colleagues include at least two of the finest people I know. One is a radiant, saintly, grey-haired headmistress; the other a dashing, bright-eyed young headmaster—sensitive, courageous, self-critical, and funny. So don't imagine that I'm here to knock the profession. What concerns me is its array of occupational hazards.

These, to judge from recent reports, can be severe. Outsize pupils throw chairs about; muggers lurk in the playground of a winter's evening; parents burst into the classroom with fisticuffs or threats. One young woman teacher was told by a fatuous magistrate that she must expect to be beaten up a few times in her career. Danger money for working in Coke Lane Comprehensive or PS 84? Karate lessons or SAS escorts? It all seems a long way from *Tom Brown's Schooldays* or *Little Women*: but that's not the type of hazard I have in mind.

One, slightly more insidious, is the fact of spending so much of the day—if so little of the year—in what educationists call "the teaching situation." Not just the fact of being cooped up with the young: that, in the later stages, can be quite rewarding, even for boarding-school housemasters with less privacy than the inmates of a zoo. What really takes its toll of the personality is being the village explainer, the eternal wiseacre, everyone's talking encyclopaedia, the all-purpose columnist with his pulpit drone. Some teachers love the role. Catch them in a TV or radio discussion programme: the fluent one with his head back and some good dramatic pauses is either a member of the Cabinet or an usher in his element. And even those who dislike pontificating can't quite escape the dread habit of holding forth. Sometimes at dinner parties you hear a new kind of silence, as in a broadcasting studio: the only sound, by golly, is your own voice. Are they agog? Or stupefied? Most probably they're both bored and impatient, longing for the drone to stop. When it does, there's a fumbling rustle as they collect their thoughts and resume the small-talk. You, the big talker, retreat into by-play with the bread roll.

Contretemps like this are just the tip of the iceberg. It's not that teachers or lecturers are inherently tedious or anti-social. Most of us have harangued others at some stage in our lives. What makes life difficult for professional educators is the often unacknowledged tension between them and everyone else.

One reason is what might be called the illusion of universal expertise. Those who work for the railways grow accustomed to party conversations about dirty and unpunctual trains; off-duty air hostesses parry questions about plastic food; Inland Revenue officials, if unmasked, face an inquisition on income tax. Teachers, likewise, are forced to discuss their subject. Not mathematics, or history, or sub-atomic physics, but that great grey-green greasy sausage of a subject, Education, on which everyone's an expert, if only in the old root sense of the Latin *experior*, having suffered at school. They may be longing to discuss the Middle East, or *E.T.*, or the need for a new Bretton Woods: but no, it's got to be teaching and what it was like in the old days and why it's so difficult now for Tommy or Julian or Mary-Lou. Some victims of perpetual buttonholing are as wary as spies or sanitary inspectors. "Well, actually, I'm a teacher", they grudgingly admit.

AS WELL THEY MAY. Supposedly, and in all school prospectuses, teachers and parents are allies in the noble task of educating the young. But look at the fine print. Most parents, unless I'm unduly cynical, want their children—their own children—to succeed: to graduate *magna cum laude*, to get a starred First, to land a plum job. They also want an all-round education, nothing narrowly academic, a broadening of horizons, and a range of suitable friends. But above all it's Junior they're thinking of—not the good of the school, or a caring, non-divisive society. If life's a rat race, they want a head start.

Teachers, by contrast, have wider responsibilities: they try to implement the ideals to which even the most selfish parent pays lip-service. Their job is not to see that Junior comes top, but to develop all their pupils' best abilities, including their social skills and altruistic concerns. Later life may be a rat race: but the aim is to make people, not rats. And few things are more irritating to a conscientious teacher than those busy, pushing parents, straight out of some old Nichols-and-May rou-



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tine, forever fussing about their child's grades and demanding to see the head of the school. To run a class on that basis would be as hopeless as trying to run a world trading system in which every country had a balance-of-payments surplus. The common interest is never quite the same as that of individuals or nations by themselves.

This isn't to say, of course, that teachers are never guilty of cant. Watching them demonstrate for more pay, or no corporal punishment, or the abolition of "élitist" schools, I've now and then been struck by what bums some of them look. The jeans, the beards, the beads, the scowls—even the scrawls on the signboards—make me wonder yet again at a system which consigns our children for so long to the care of others, not all of whom we'd be eager to invite home. Nor is it merely appearances. The tone of their spokesmen, their letters to the press, their occasional political naivety—all these can set one's teeth on edge. Nuts to parent-teacher partnership: this seems more like a tug-of-war.

Or, as headline writers put it, a tug-of-love. I thought I scented battle many years ago, when a minor job in "education" brought me into contact with teachers for the first time since leaving school. Suddenly, I was in a closed world of professionals, some of whom saw the home as an influence to be countered. Bad, broken, or bookless homes I could agree might hinder a child's chances; but some dedicated teachers seemed to have an undue hunger to mould their charges, perhaps in lieu of children of their own. Aspects of child development which I'd always assumed to be parents' responsibility were becoming the concern of nursery and primary schools: the more conscientious the teacher, the greater the eagerness to do more than simply instruct in basic skills. Parent-teacher conflict was still no more than latent: I never saw it break into strife. Yet, even in those days, I sensed trouble coming. It was like watching two ships in a narrow seaway, bearing down on each other. There was tricky navigation ahead.

NOW, A GENERATION LATER, with children at two different schools, I'm in the seaway myself, and I find it hard to steer. One of the establishments, a junior school, has a parent-teacher association; the other, a senior school, does not. In the senior school, I hear of official behaviour which no adult would tolerate: an art teacher scrawling "lively" lines over "timid", delicate work; a geography teacher talking of "your dear little parents"; others telling children "not to be so stupid" and "not to play with your pens" when they want to take notes in class. To complain individually is to make one's child a hostage, liable to reprisals; one can only advise patience, when one wants to raise Cain. A parent-teacher association might help: but experience in the other school raises doubts. Time and again, parents there have asked whether language teaching might be started before the age of eight, when children are so receptive. Time and again, the official minutes record the curt, steely answer: "This is a curriculum question, and is not permissible to be discussed by the P.T.A." A similar response meets equally reasonable requests for an earlier start on swimming, or queries about drama. The assembled parents and teachers instead debate such matters as nits, lunches, and fund-raising. Basic issues of "education" are ruled out. This despite two fairly basic facts: first, that parents pay their children's teachers, either directly or through taxation; secondly, that many parents are educationists, employers, or otherwise qualified professionals.

It seems extraordinary; but the specialist press suggests that it's not uncommon. *Where?*—the British educational counterpart to consumer magazines—has carried many similar stories, and even provided a kit-style advice package for those unable to persuade their school either to establish a parent-teacher association or to give it enough scope. Always, on these occasions, there's a liberal dose of reassurance. "Most head teachers, approached sympathetically, will be only too happy to listen to parents. . . . " Most, but not all; and of those, only a few may take effective action. Meanwhile, as I've said, it's often invidious for a parent to raise individual grievances, for fear of repercussions on the child.

So what can be done? Hard cases make bad law: but bad law makes hard cases; and there do seem powerful arguments for parental involvement in schools as a matter of course. Voting with one's feet is a sorry alternative—not only because it may mean moving house, but also because in other respects the school may be admirable. Perhaps it's had a dud year's intake, or is going through a short bad patch. It may need a new head, or early retirement for a few selected teachers. And there's even something in the lick-'em-into-shape belief that children should put up with things. At my old school there was at least one member of staff whom people regarded as dotty. "Once you've been through that class", they used to say, "you'll be able to cope with anyone." Outside an asylum, certainly, I've never met greater eccentricity.

Nor should one forget that teaching can be a thankless task. The holidays are splendid; so is the flattering attention of a bright class, or the reflected glory of a brilliant pupil's later career. But it's not all fun and team games. If you're inwardly a shy, deferential person who's gone through the hoops of education only to start in school again as a young adult handling those same hoops—isn't there, along with your sense of security, the faint feeling of challenges missed? And

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when you've been teaching for a few years, isn't there a temptation to turn into a "character"? To overdo the Mr Chips fusspot image—to grow a fanciful moustache, wear ever more "ethnic" dresses—to become the school wag, or the martinet, or the matey avant-garde rebel? As the children grow physically bigger and more precocious, don't you envy their sexuality, their sophistication, their often misleading air of confidence? Aren't you inclined to question the "relevance" of some of your teaching? With calculators and classroom computers, do all three Rs need so much emphasis? Do messy "projects" cribbed from encyclopaedias teach as much as experts used to argue? Can you really compete with television and the pop industry in the battle for young hearts and minds?

Finally, how can you refresh yourself after months and years of juvenile jokes and hackneyed "revelations", repeatedly unfolding the same stale novelties, conducting yet another package tour over well-trodden ground? Summer courses, study groups, grimly concerned "workshops" may do something; but the chances are that they too will be inside the profession, a guilt-ridden gathering from the educational ghetto, the blamed leading the blamed. What's really needed is a change of occupation, or at least a sabbatical—just as many parents and most educationists might benefit from having to teach. Short of that, is there a simpler solution?

THE ANSWER'S SO OBVIOUS that it's laughable. When history, or a conflict of interests, puts two parties on a potential collision course, wise pilots take especial care. At sea, they set up separation lanes. In international affairs, they seek the overriding common interest and establish bodies to represent it—the UN Secretariat, IATA, the IMF. Parent-teacher relations fall into this same category. Each "side" has its own view of any problem, its own immediate concerns. But as in East-West negotiations or the wrangles within the Common Market, there still remains a common interest. The vital task is to see that it's served.

My own experience, in a raft of such establishments, suggests that the great obstacle is fear. Parents, confronting some teachers, can't escape reflexes from childhood: "going to see the head" still seems a portent of doom. Teachers, who've undergone expensive training and still more costly wear-and-tear in the classroom, not only resent lay interference: they're also nervous at the implied reproach. The way out of the double dilemma is to make parent-teacher contact much more a routine matter, and less of an exercise in crisis management. "Confidence-building" is as important at school as in Geneva.

With mutual confidence gradually established—not bilaterally by individual parents and teachers, but through multilateral institutions which are permanent and fair—a quite new approach becomes possible. In some cases, even the school buildings can find new, out-of-hours uses. Some parents can help teach extra-curricular subjects, or give advice on post-school careers. Some teachers can broaden their horizons, perhaps by taking holiday jobs in a parent's firm. A few pushy busybodies may try to exploit the new system; but when everyone's involved, such pests are easier to detect and thwart. Perhaps, in the end, coming to see education as a joint endeavour, parents and teachers may begin to curb their reciprocal wisecracks. Many a parent, after all, is "something in the City"—or the press, or the literary world—and nothing at home.

*M*

## An Arrow

An arrow from a bow. An arrow launched from a bow
does not seek to kill birds on its way to the target.
An arrow launched from a bow wants to be a sword
protecting your house against foxes. The distress
of often repeated words like last year's rain
points to walls moving into solitude,
leaving shadow lands behind them, till a whirlwind
comes to lead the shadows astray. Until a wind
comes from the sea to burn away
my remoteness from you

*David Rokeah*

*translated from the Hebrew by the author and Peter Porter*

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*Jenny Joseph*

# Untitled

Every year when the extreme cold
Falls suddenly over us, cracking the skin
Straightaway, that has been oiled by Summer,
Freezing to a standstill the heart, strangling movement,
I hear the same awful story, in different versions.

I had begun to think it was the myth-making faculty
Like the wartime story that a man in Australia
And a man in Finland
Heard from his father:
The limb blown off that landed in his dinner
In the exact same way; and only some detail revealed
(A sock in one version, in another a hand with a mitten
In one a lamb chop, in another a plate of porridge)
That this was a variant of archetypal legend
And brought relief and laughter that it was not real.

An idiot brother chained to a bed for years;
The drunken return only to punch up the wife,
Every year pregnant, and to get her pay-packet,
Dog on cushions and relative in a boxroom
Kept on biscuits.
Punch hitting Judy over the head with a stick.

Gruesome stories
Arising, miasma from marshes, from the foetid pools
That stand in the human mind.

Alas not so, alas I am forced to listen:
They found a child of eight dead in a bath.
It had been a night the coldest over Christmas
When—heating in the house, good dinner inside me
Woolly scarf round my feet, five blankets, thick mattress,
Eiderdown, bottle—I had felt too freezing
To put out my arm from underneath the bedclothes
The air inside the house had such a bite.

The child had nothing on, there was no towel
No flannel he could clutch or put against him.
The window had been wedged open and the door locked.
The snow-laden wind cut through the curtainless room
Keeping the enamel five degrees below freezing.
The child was frozen blue in the empty white bath
His urine an iced runnel.

It was Christmas Eve when his parents locked him in.

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This year I hear that last night there in Poland
It was 37 degrees below and men,
Taken across the snow-stormed plain, were made
To stand outside the wagons in the dark
And hosed down with water that instantly froze on them
And left till dawn, standing in ice-bound Europe.

Who are these people? The woman I see in the grocer's
Polite to customers? The couple who, arm in arm
Every Saturday morning go to the Post Office?
Numbed, as with cold, all I do is mouth
In a silent howl, like the paralysing frost,
"How long—? How long?"

Another year; a Summer has intervened,
A healthy fat baby next door has been leaping about.
A little chill breath of Autumn creeps through the dusk
I close the door, think about lighting fires.
Tired, a bit cold, I think of an early night:
Some warm food, a bath and a soft clean blanket—and sleep.

In my hot bath lies drowned the ice-dead child.

*Peter Porter*

# What is Evil?

Evil stirs in its swamp of fibres,
which may be angel's hair
or the major ganglia used to prove
divinity and providence.
It sits like a badged toad
on the hot evening path,
a lumpy menace without harm,
it sharpens the tenor's leading note
to tip the balance of old art,
it is the unpalatable rush of heat
on which thought rides
and suffocation waits.

Evil is the friend I am to me,
it introduces me to someone
without a face who says he's death.

But death has left the room
and only a body is here with me.

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# The End of a Patriotic Vision

## *Noël Coward's Sentiment—By* DAVID CANNADINE

IT IS ARGUABLE that Noël Coward's greatest contribution to 20th-century entertainment was the creation of an image of himself as the clever, sophisticated, witty young man, clad in a silk dressing gown, effortlessly dashing off a play before breakfast. Indeed, this picture has powerfully influenced most critical evaluation of his work, which is usually dismissed as trivial, frivolous, and irrelevant—a view which Coward himself did much to promote.[1]

"I have", he once wrote, "no deep thoughts about the human race." The stage, he argued, "is primarily a place of entertainment. . . . Political or social propaganda in the theatre, as a general rule, is a cracking bore." And in his introduction to the *Theatrical Companion to Coward*, Terence Rattigan endorsed this opinion. Plays which date, he explained, usually do so because of the contemporary nature of their political opinions, moral judgments and messages on how to change the world. However, he added, "all such paraphernalia are happily mainly absent from Coward's work."

But are they? Undeniably, Coward was "bleakly uninterested in politics" in a formal sense; he sincerely believed that the theatre should not be "a temporary soap-box for political propaganda"; and he genuinely felt that his work contained no such message. Indeed, he once warned against the "nonsense that will be written about me and my works and my motives" after his death. But even while Coward was still alive, Sheridan Morley's pioneering and perceptive study (1969) offered much support for the theory that within him "a social historian, a moralist and a philosopher were forever asking to be let out." I should like to argue that, from the 1930s to the 1960s, much of Coward's large and astonishingly varied output was devoted to offering the English a particular view of themselves, their country and their Empire. Further, I suggest that one explanation of the ups-and-downs in Coward's reputation may lie in the degree to which his particular vision of England was, or was not, appropriate to the actual circumstances of the time.

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COWARD'S EARLY YEARS gave only a slight indication that praise of England might form a substantial part of his later output. He was born in December 1899, and had a lower-middle-class upbringing in suburban south London. Urged on by a dominating mother, he took to the theatre early, and his formal education was very limited. The First World War passed almost unnoticed, and he regarded his "brief and inglorious" Army career in 1918 as an annoying interlude in his professional advancement. "I was too young", he later recalled, "and ambitious and filled with my own concerns for it to have much significance for me." Thereafter he achieved remarkable fame on both sides of the Atlantic, as a wide range of theatrical productions tumbled from his pen, including sparkling reviews such as *London Calling* and *This Year of Grace*, controversial studies of drugs, sex and drink, as in *The Vortex* and *Fallen Angels*, the sentimental escapism of *The Queen was in the*

[1] The most important sources for this article are the works of Coward himself. For the plays, see: *Play Parade* (6 vols., 1934–62) and *Suite in Three Keys* (1966). For his short stories, see: *To Step Aside* (1939); *Star Quality* (1951); *Pretty Polly Barlow* (1964); *Bon Voyage* (1967). For autobiography, see: *Present Indicative* (1937); *Australia Visited* (1941); *Middle East Diary* (1944); *Future Indefinite* (1954). See also: *The Lyrics of Noël Coward* (1965); *Not Yet the Dodo and Other Verse* (1967); his novel *Pomp and Circumstance* (1960) and *The Noël Coward Diaries*, ed. Morley and Payn (Weidenfeld, 1982). Also of importance are: Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *Theatrical Companion to Coward* (1957); Sheridan Morley, *A Talent to Amuse: A Biography of Noël Coward* (revised edn, 1974); Cole Lesley, *The Life of Noël Coward* (1976); and Cole Lesley, Graham Payn and Sheridan Morley, *Noël Coward and His Friends* (1979).



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*Parlour* and *Bitter Sweet*, the disillusioned anger of *Post Mortem*, and brittle comedies like *Hay Fever*, *The Marquise*, and *Private Lives*.

Understandably, the critics found it exceedingly hard to discern any coherent vision in this bewildering diversity of forms and styles, as an angry melodrama was followed by a scintillating review, a comedy of manners by sentimental nostalgia. One significant fact which did emerge, however, was that the range of Coward's work was much broader than was the mind which created it. As St John Ervine put it:

> "I am amazed and disturbed at the slenderness of his intellectual resources. . . . We might well wonder whether he had ever read a good book, seen a fine picture or a notable play, listened to music of worth, observed a piece of sculpture, or taken any interest in even the commonplaces of a cultured man's life. . . . His political, social and religious interests are negligible or non-existent."

Much of this analysis remained valid for the rest of Coward's life. He had no interest in religion, except to condemn it now and then for its intolerance; and throughout his work there was a hostility towards the intelligentsia which, although occasionally very funny (as in his famous send-up of the Sitwells in *London Calling*), sometimes bordered on the philistine. Moreover, his understanding of the realities of political life, class consciousness or imperial power was never even dimly developed.[2] And yet, within these formidable limitations, Coward discovered a certain image of England in the 1930s to which he remained wedded all his life.

THE PRODUCTION of *Cavalcade* in 1931 established him as a patriotic writer. Alternating between intimate domestic scenes and large-scale crowd tableaux, it surveyed the great moments of recent English history—the Relief of Mafeking, Queen Victoria's funeral, the sinking of the *Titanic*, Armistice Night—through the eyes of one middle-class family, the Marryots. Towards the end of Act III, the moral of the work was explicitly articulated in Jane Marryot's New Year's Eve toast:

> "Let's couple the future of England with the past of England. The glories and victories and triumphs that are over, and the sorrows that are over, too. Let's drink to our sons who made part of the pattern, and to our hearts that died with them. Let's drink to the spirit and gallantry and courage that made a strange heaven out of an unbelievable hell, and let's drink to the hope that one day, this country of ours, which we love so much, will find dignity and greatness and peace again."

Immediately, this was followed by a chaotic night-club scene, in which *Twentieth-century Blues* ("What is there to strive for, love or keep alive for?") was sung. Then the stage was darkened, "the lights slowly come up, and the whole stage is composed of massive tiers, upon which stand the entire company. The Union Jack flies over their heads, as they sing *God Save the King*. . . ." The message was clear, and was reiterated by Coward in his first-night speech: "I hope that this play has made you feel that, in spite of the troublous times we are living in, it is still a pretty exciting thing to be English."

But what exactly did he mean by this? "Coward's call to arms" was how the press interpreted it, a view made seemingly more plausible by the coincidental return of the National Government with a large majority. But the England which Coward hymned in this work was not so much political, nationalist or jingoistic, as familial,

[2] See Douglas Dunn, "Pity the Poor Philosophers", ENCOUNTER, October 1980:
"His wit was virtually fail-safe, his dramatic skills certain, but his mind, when it came to interpretations of the national predicament, was little more than dogmatically commonplace. . . ."

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traditional, and historical. The "love of England" which it contained was "a certain pride in some of our very typical characteristics", as exemplified by Jane Marryot: "ordinary, kind and unobtrusively heroic, capable of deep suffering and incapable of cheap complaint. . . ." Coward readily admitted that her toast speech was as "deeply sincere and as true as I could make it"; but there was not a mention in it of governments or politicians or nationalism. The England of *Cavalcade* was storybook England, in which the "great events" of its recent history were used as a way of illustrating the admirable characteristics of its middle classes. For Coward, this was so instinctive, so self-evident a viewpoint that it never occurred to him that he was thereby using the theatre as a place of propaganda. But the press were right to see that *Cavalcade* had a message; they merely interpreted it incorrectly.

BY THIS TIME, Coward had made two other important discoveries about England, the first of which was the British Empire. In the winter of 1929–30, he travelled across the Pacific to Tokyo, China, Hong Kong, Indo-China, Singapore, Malaya and Colombo, and returned to England on a P-&-O liner. Two years later, he went on another lengthy tour to South America, and in 1935 he returned to the Far East, visiting Tokyo, Shanghai, Singapore, and Bali. For Coward, these journeys were not merely a way of escaping from the pressures of theatrical and personal life: they also meant the discovery of Grand Hotels, British Embassies, and Government Houses—a world which was to loom so large in his later work. As Cole Lesley explains:

> "He belonged to a time when people—and his fame placed him in that class of person—went automatically on arrival at their destination to sign the book at Government House or the British Embassy, and he delighted in the subsequent invitations, the luxury and the grandeur."

Significantly, this was *all* he saw: his picture of the Empire was as narrow as his image of England. There was no room in this imperial vision for power or prejudice or exploitation, for poverty, famine, or riot. The natives were colourful, contented, and quiescent—a picturesque backdrop, but no more. As Coward himself candidly observed apropos of his travels: "My body has certainly wandered a good deal, but I have the uneasy suspicion that my mind has not wandered nearly enough."

His second discovery in this period was the British Navy. In the spring of 1930, when on his first extended visit to the Far East, he journeyed from Shanghai to Hong Kong aboard *HMS Suffolk*, and thus began his life-long love affair with the senior service. Again, his image was blinkered: it was the ritual, the traditions, and the officers which he saw, rather than the loneliness, the boredom or the professional expertise. Like the Empire, the Navy was for Coward a *holiday*:

> "To me, the life of a guest in a warship is deeply satisfactory. I have passed some of the happiest hours of my life in various wardrooms. The secret of naval good manners is hard to define; perhaps discipline has a lot to do with it, and prolonged contact with the sea; perhaps a permanent background of such dignity makes for simplicity of mind."

Thereafter, Coward became a frequent "guest of the Royal Navy in all parts of the world and in every type of ship." He spent many summers in the 1930s in the Mediterranean, as the guest of sea dogs such as Admiral Sir Dudley Pound and Admiral Sir Philip Vian, and the Mountbattens were especial friends. "Whenever I wanted a holiday", Coward later recalled, somewhat breezily, "I went to wherever his ship happened to be."

THESE DISCOVERIES had a powerful impact on his work in the 1930s, as he developed a limited but sincere attachment to the mandarin institutions of the British Empire so fervent, affectionate and romantic that he could rarely bring himself to articulate it directly. This is well illustrated in "P-&-O 1930", a poem not written until the late 1950s, but clearly based on these earlier experiences and expressing his response to them.

Unusually, in this work, Coward succeeded in articulating directly his sincere affection for the Empire, which he generally concealed behind a mask of understatement, mockery, and irony. It is an elaborate poem, which tells the story of a P-&-O ship as it journeys from Shanghai, via Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Bombay, Aden and Suez to England. A superficially atmospheric work, it catches vividly the picturesqueness of the Orient—the junks, the sampans and the rickshaws, the beggars, the markets, the fortune-tellers and the bazaars. But underlying this colour, the poem revels in the swagger, the exhilaration and the world-encompassing reality of far-flung empire:

> *Gibraltar rose, impressive, dignified,*
> *Knowing no rising sun could ever set*
> *On such a symbol of imperial pride,*
> *On such invulnerable majesty.*

In particular, it presents a sentimentally appreciative picture of what Empire meant to the British men and women who ran it—the burdens of Imperial office, the loneliness of overseas

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service, and the obsessive nostalgia of exile. The heroine is "the Governor's Lady", who although "inwardly timorous and shy" is also "indestructibly self-possessed", exemplifying that stern, unbending sense of duty that made the Empire great:

*Bugles blowing, deafening, insistent,*
*The Governor's Lady, amiable but distant*
*Returning home for six months' leave*
*A necessary, all too brief reprieve*
*From State Receptions, Women's Federations,*
*Official visits to remote plantations,*
*From garden parties under alien trees*
*And mocking, inefficient ADCs.*

For her, as for the other passengers, the climax of the journey is the first sight of England, endowed by virtue of absence with a singular and magical attractiveness:

*England at last . . .*
*Passengers crowd the rails, eager to catch*
*The first glimpse, after months and years away*
*Of their beloved and inalienable home.*
*This is the moment that must be remembered*
*Set in the heart and mind, branded upon*
*The retinas of tired English eyes,*
*Tired of violent colours, tired of glare*
*And heat and sand and jungles and bright birds*
*Eyes that so often longingly have gazed*
*Through beaded curtains of torrential rain*
*To gentler rain falling on English woods.*

There is not a word here that is double-edged, not a trace of mockery or irony. The Empire and its servants stand out foursquare—admired, respected, and loved.

THIS, UNDOUBTEDLY, was Coward's private opinion of Empire. But in the 1930s, as a writer, he concealed this sentimental admiration behind a façade of gentle mockery, most memorably displayed in *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*. Like "P-&-O 1930", this song was inspired by his Far Eastern travels of 1929–30 and, like that poem again, it reads like an itinerary of the places he visited. It was written while journeying from Hanoi to Saigon in February 1930, was presented two years later in the review *Words and Music*, and remains Coward's most famous exercise in imperial evocation. In form, it is a patter song of almost Gilbertian complexity; in atmosphere it is suffused with the steam and heat of the Orient; and in content it ostensibly mocks the British for their inflexibility:

*It's such a surprise for the Eastern eyes to see*
*That though the English are effete, they're quite impervious to heat. . . .*
*It seems such a shame when the English claim the earth*
*That they give rise to such hilarity and mirth.*

But beneath the gentle teasing, the attitude is essentially the same as that in "P-&-O 1930"—pride in the greatness of Empire, and appreciation of the fortitude with which the White Man's Burden is borne. At one and the same time, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* both celebrates and exemplifies that quintessentially English mandarin trait: self-regarding self-mockery.

A GREAT DEAL OF Coward's other work in the 1930s was preoccupied with articulating these imperial and naval images. In *Point Valaine*, for instance, he wrote his first play in a colonial setting, where the characters "sit on the verandah and talk very sentimentally about skys and fogs in Piccadilly." *Planters' Wives* repeated the approach of *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, as did *The Stately Homes of England*, which treated the aristocracy in the same manner as the pro-consuls. *Half-Caste Woman*, as its title implies, was a rare attempt to say something deeper. Several of the plays in *Tonight at 8.30* were equally mandarin in tone. *We Were Dancing*, for instance, was a story of love and infidelity set in the mythical Pacific Island of Samolo; and in *Hands Across the Sea* a naval-cum-society couple (modelled on the Mountbattens) are embarrassed by the arrival in London of two planter friends from the same island. Both plays exude an imperial atmosphere—the Indian Army, the Royal Navy, the P-&-O; retired Admirals, worthy planters, colonial gossip; Hong Kong, Burma, Penang and Singapore. Likewise, *Red Peppers* contained the number *Has Anybody Seen Our Ship?*, which was an appreciative pastiche of Edwardian music-hall songs about the Navy; and in *Fumed Oak*, Henry Gow muses on the sea of Conrad and Kipling—"a sea with whacking great waves and water spouts and typhoons and flying fish, and phosphorus making the foam look as though it was lit up."

Finally, at the close of the decade, Coward returned to look again at England itself. In *This Happy Breed* he wrote an exclusively domestic *Cavalcade*, another story of middle-class family life, again pinned on the great events of 20th-century English history—this time the end of the War, the General Strike, the return of the National Government, the abdication of Edward VIII, and the Munich agreement. As in *Cavalcade*, the play celebrated the virtues of the English middle classes, as the Gibbons family bear with tight-lipped, understated fortitude the inevitable bereavements and unexpected sorrows of family life. Again, there is the familiar distrust of politicians ("The old men at the top"), and of left-wing

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intellectuals ("I don't want to have anything to do with a man who listens to a lot of dirty foreigners and goes against his own country"). Once more, the values which are acclaimed are those of common decency ("There are worse things than being ordinary and respectable and living the way you've been brought up to live"), and a political, consensual conservatism ("The country suddenly got tired . . . and it's up to us ordinary people to keep things steady").

As Coward later explained, this was a play written "with sincerity, affection and the inherent understanding that is the result of personal experience", for he drew extensively on his own memories of lower-middle-class life in the suburbs of south London. But by this time, he had long since abandoned that life, which may explain why Frank Gibbons—the hero who was played by Coward in the original production—is not entirely convincing. He was, as Coward admitted, rather larger than life, expressing views which Coward believed the lower-middle classes *should* have, regardless of whether they did or not, and doing so with an implausible articulacy and coherence. He serves in the First World War, drives a bus in the General Strike, prefers hotch-potch British progress to utopian socialist revolutions, is in favour of the National Government, has a low opinion of Edward VIII for giving up his job, and is sceptical of the Munich settlement and of the politicians who made it. And, using again the toast technique from *Cavalcade*, the play concludes with Frank Gibbons explaining the facts of life to his baby grandson, thereby pointing the moral:

> "You belong to a race that's been bossy for years, and one reason it's held on so long as it has is that nine times out of ten it's behaved decently and treated people right. Just lately, I'll admit, we've been giving at the knees a bit, and letting down people who trusted us, and allowing noisy little men to bully us with a lot of guns and bombs and aeroplanes. But don't worry—that won't last—the people themselves, the ordinary people like you and me, know something better than all the fussy old politicians put together—we know what we belong to, where we come from, and where we're going. We may not know it with our brains, but we know it with our roots. And we know another thing, too, and it's this. We 'aven't lived and died and struggled all these hundreds of years to get decency and justice and freedom for ourselves without being prepared to fight fifty wars if need be—to keep 'em. . . ."

THIS IMAGE OF ENGLAND and her empire in which Coward believed so fervently remained essentially unaltered for the rest of his life, regardless of how far it did—or did not—correspond to later reality. Essentially, it was a blend of romantic, mandarin imperialism, which was usually disguised by a façade of affectionate mockery, and a consensual, apolitical conservatism, which conflated the domestic rhetoric of Stanley Baldwin with the anti-appeasement of Winston Churchill.[3] To Coward, the essential wisdom of these views was self-evident. As he said of Lord Lloyd, in words equally applicable to himself, "he was an imperialist in the best sense, because his passionate love of England and his unshakeable belief in the British Empire were based on common sense. . . ." But in retrospect, it is clear that this ostensibly apolitical vision in fact unthinkingly accepted a certain social, political, and imperial order as axiomatic, God-given. Moreover, it was well suited to the mood of the 1930s: for it presented the English with an agreeable, comforting picture of themselves as decent people who treated others right, at the very time when such qualities seemed under threat, from within and without.

In the Second World War, the threat was even more direct, and Coward's response was a powerful and sincere patriotic avowal, which strongly contrasted with his attitude in the previous World War:

> "I was a flagrant, unabashed sentimentalist, and likely to remain so until the end of my days. I did love England and all it stood for. I loved its follies and apathies and curious streak of genius; I loved standing to attention for *God Save the King*; I loved British courage, British humour, and British understatement; I loved the justice, efficiency and even the dullness of British colonial administration. I loved the people—the old, the extraordinary, the good, the bad, the indifferent, and what is more, I belonged to that exasperating, weather-sodden little island, with its uninspired cooking, its muddled thinking, and its unregenerate pride, and it belonged to me, whether I liked it or not."

In the light of Coward's experiences and writing in the '30s, this image of his England will come as no surprise: it is *Cavalcade*, *This Happy Breed*, and *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* conflated. All that is missing from it is the disapproval of party politics; but that, too, is well attested in a Wartime letter to his mother, in which he explained that by England he meant "the ordinary people who belong to it", and their right "to be able to grumble about governments as much as we like."

BUT COWARD'S WARTIME ATTITUDES were not merely a continuation of his feelings in the 1930s.

[3] For Baldwin's England, and one particular novelist's reflection of it, see my "Politics, Art and Propaganda: The Case of Two 'Worcestershire Lads' ", *Midland History*, IV (1977), pp. 97–122.

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For, just as his increased distance from his earlier lower-middle-class background meant that the character of Frank Gibbons was not entirely convincing, so his extended Wartime absences meant that his image of England became even more romanticised. His account of his feelings for London is particularly revealing:

> "London as a city in the past had never attracted me much. It was my home, of course, and I knew it intimately, perhaps too intimately. Now, suddenly, in my early forties, I saw it for the first time as somewhere where I belonged. This sentimental revelation was made clearer to me by the fact that I was staying in a London hotel for the first time in my life. It was a strange sensation to step out of the comfortable impersonality of the Savoy into the personal, familiar streets of my childhood. I felt a sudden urge to visit the Tower, the Abbey, Madam Tussaud's and go to the zoo. The move from Gerald Road to the Strand had transformed me overnight into a tourist in my own home, and as such it seemed to me more attractive and more genuinely gay than it had ever been before. . . . In 1941, the real lights of London shone through the blackout with a steady brilliance that I shall never forget."

The admission that he was now "a tourist in my own home", and that it was precisely *because* of this that London seemed so attractive, is especially significant. From now on, increasingly, Coward was to see London and England in the same way that he had always viewed the Empire—through the windows of Grand Hotels. And his response in both cases would be the same: a brief encounter with a colonial governor, or a chance episode witnessed in a metropolitan street, and there would be a sincere if superficial patriotic response. Sometimes it suited the contemporary mood; but on other occasions it did not.

The best example of what Coward could achieve by this means was *London Pride*, his most famous patriotic lyric, which was inspired by just such a combination of circumstance and feeling, as he watched some Londoners on an Underground station one morning after a night of particularly heavy bombing:

> "They all seemed to me to be gay and determined and wholly admirable, and for a moment or two I was overwhelmed by a wave of sentimental pride. A tune started in my head, then and there, and was finished in a couple of days. The tune was an age-old English melody that had been appropriated by the Germans and used as a foundation for *Deutschland über alles*, and I considered that the time had come for us to have it back in London, where it belonged. I am proud of the words of this song; they express what I felt at the time, and what I still feel":

> *In our city darkened now, street and square and crescent,*
> *We can feel our living past in our shadowed present.*
> *Ghosts beside our starlit Thames who lived and loved and died,*
> *Keep throughout the ages London Pride.*

Here, Coward caught and articulated exactly the mood of the Blitz. The feelings of understated pride and bravery were correctly judged; the sense of history and the evocation of the city were just right; and the consensual flavour ("from the Ritz to the Anchor and Crown") was exactly appropriate. Frank Gibbons or Jane Marryot would both have been equally eager to sing those words.

IN THIS CASE, as an outsider, Coward was able to present Londoners with an image of themselves which both described and enhanced their Wartime feelings: his sincere if limited patriotic vision was sharpened rather than distorted by his detachment, and enabled him to express their mood in a more concentrated way than would have been possible had he been ground down by the drudgery, tedium and deprivation of day to day living in Wartime London. Another song, *Could You Please Oblige Us with a Bren Gun?*, paid tribute to the Home Guard and to its talent for improvisation in the same affectionately teasing manner that he had perfected in *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*. But his judgment did occasionally err. *Don't Let's Be Beastly to the Germans*, for example, attacked with savage, sarcastic mockery the appeasers of the 1930s, and the do-gooders of the War, who urged that Germany be treated leniently. But so many misconstrued its ironic appeal—"Let's help the dirty swine again to occupy the Rhine again"—as a genuine plea for forgiveness that the song was suppressed for a time.

WHEN IT CAME TO TELLING the English about their Empire in Wartime, Coward's judgment was far less sound. He spent much of the War on propaganda tours to the United States and the Antipodes, and in entertaining the troops in South Africa, India, and the Middle East. It was, doubtless, hard and exacting work; but it also brought Coward into closer contact with that mandarin world of ambassadors, governors-general, and admirals by which he had become so captivated in the 1930s. "I felt strongly", he later wrote in describing these travels, "that my name, my reputation and my friends would get me wherever I wanted to go within reason, an assumption which I am bound to say was abundantly justified. . . ." So, in the pages of his memoirs, we can

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follow him on his proconsular progress from Australia ("I spent Christmas with Lord and Lady Gowrie at Canberra"), to New Zealand ("Lunch with Lord Galway, the Governor General"), to Beirut ("My hosts were General and Lady Spears"), to Trinidad ("I was weatherbound for three days, and stayed with Sir Bede Clifford at Government House"), to Kandy ("Dickie Mountbatten and I dined alone"), to Delhi ("We stayed in the Viceroy's House, with Lord and Lady Wavell"), to Madras ("We stayed in Government House with Lady Hope").

Not surprisingly, these highly-publicised tours did not go down at all well in blitzed, beleaguered Britain, as even war itself appeared to provide yet another opportunity for Coward to enjoy a holiday as the privileged, comfortable guest of the British overseas establishment. And, as this account of a stop-off in Northern Nigeria suggests, Wartime did nothing to broaden Coward's imperial vision: the natives were still there to provide a picturesque background for the British; and the British were there to give him hospitality.

> "The resident came to meet me, and drive me back to his house. On the way we stopped off for a drink at the club, which as an example of the 'outpost of Empire' tradition was accurate to the last detail. There were bead curtains, faded chintz covers, and a rack full of month-old English newspapers and magazines. There was a mixed tennis foursome going on which might have been lifted bodily, court and players, from Cheltenham, and set down in one piece in this savage, alien land. 'Well played', 'yours, partner', 'love fifteen'. Clear English voices echoed across the dusty grass separating the verandah from the edge of the court, while from the village nearby came the thud of native drums and the thin wail of reed instruments. The natives in Maiduguri move beautifully and wear robes of the most lovely shades of blue which they dye themselves. The resident British moved perhaps less beautifully, and their apparel was nondescript, but their quality was unmistakable. That small club, so very far away from home, was touching and curiously impressive."

In a similar vein, Coward published his *Middle East Diary* in 1944, which was full of such episodes. Ivor Brown's comment summed up its tone well:

> "He sees so much—and so little. He has travelled far more than most men of his age, and yet, when he writes, it always has to be of the same little world. Dump him anywhere, on any island of the seven seas, and he would certainly at once run into somebody known as Tim or Tiny, Boodles or Bims, and be dining with an excellency or an admiral twenty minutes later. If there were natives on the island, he would hardly notice. God put them there, no doubt, to serve dinners to Excellencies."

In Wartime, Coward's imperial vision was too self-indulgent for him to recapture that affectionately mocking tone of the '30s, except occasionally. One such example was his parody of the Indian Army officer, *I Wonder What Happened to Him*, inspired by his experiences in India in 1944:

> *The India that one read about*
> *And may have been misled about*
> *In one respect has kept itself intact.*
> *Though "Pukka Sahib" traditions may have cracked*
> *And thinned*
> *That good old Indian Army's still a fact.*
> *That famous monumental man*
> *The Officer and Gentleman*
> *Still lives and breathes and functions from Bombay to Katmandu*
> *At any moment one may glimpse*
> *Matured or embryonic "blimps"*
> *Vivaciously speculating as to what became of who.*

More sentimentally, in *Mr and Mrs Edgehill*, Coward celebrated the understated fortitude of the British Resident and his wife on Cowrie Island, set against a background of the daily raising and lowering of the Union Jack, and their wish to obtain an appropriately regal picture of the King and Queen. It was based on his experience when, in 1941, he landed at Canton Island on his way from Australia to America. "Typically English", he wrote of them, "in the best possible way—simple, unpretentious and getting on with the job. . . ." In *Mr and Mrs Edgehill*, written, incidentally, on *HMS Rapid* en route from Africa to India in May 1944, that was how he described them.

COMPARED WITH his Wartime writings on the Empire, Coward's touch was much surer when it came to the Navy. As with *London Pride*, his film, *In Which We Serve*, struck exactly the right patriotic note, and did so, once more, because it was born of romantic sensitivity heightened, not eroded, by ignorance. The film was directly inspired, as Coward himself explained, by a meeting with Mountbatten shortly after the sinking of the *Kelly*:

> "After dinner, he told me the whole story of the sinking of the *Kelly* off Crete. He told it without apparent emotion, but the emotion was there, poignantly behind every word he uttered. . . . I was profoundly moved and impressed. The Royal Navy . . . means a great deal to me, and here, in this odyssey of one destroyer, was the very essence of it. All the true sentiment, the comedy, the tragedy, the casual valiance, the

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unvaunted heroism, the sadness without tears, the pride without end."

Of course, no naval commander would have put it like that, any more than a costermonger in Covent Garden would have spontaneously thought in the phrases of *London Pride*. But in supposing that these feelings were "the very essence of it", Coward was correct. *In Which We Serve* lauded, even in apparent defeat, the invincibility of the Navy, and paid tribute to the unsung heroism of all the men who made up the ship's community. It was, in short, a nautical version of *Cavalcade* and *This Happy Breed*, even down to the Captain's "Dunkirk" speech, which harked back, in style and substance, to the earlier patriotic avowals of Jane Marryot and Frank Gibbons.

As a writer and an Englishman, therefore, Coward's war was both good and bad. He was bitterly disappointed that none of his friends in high places took him seriously enough to get him an important official job; he suffered much adverse publicity, often through his own naivety; and he ran into trouble because of offences committed against Wartime currency regulations. In retrospect, too, it is clear that the War accentuated that loss of contact with Britain, and the growing obsession with Empire, already present by the late 1930s, which were to become more marked after 1945. But he had also written two cheerful comedies (*Present Laughter* and *Blithe Spirit*), several memorable patriotic songs, and created the outstanding patriotic film of the War. At a time when, perforce, issues were simplified and emotions heightened, Coward's talents and feelings were often well suited to the occasion, telling the English what they *wanted* to believe—and perhaps *did* believe—about themselves. Certainly, there would have been few to argue with his simple but sincere description of *VE-Day* itself: "I suppose this is the greatest day in our history. . . ."

THE TWENTY YEARS following the end of the War were no more happy for Britain as a great power than they were for Coward as a great star. Post-war austerity, recurrent economic difficulties, the loss of the Indian and African Empires, the fiasco of Suez and the abortive attempt to join the Common Market all suggested a nation in decline, which even the euphoria of the Queen's coronation and the unexampled prosperity of the late 1950s and early '60s could not entirely conceal. By the time *I Wonder What Happened to Him* was sung in *Sigh No More*, the "good old Indian Army" was only to be "still a fact" for two more years. Indeed, in his Wartime travels to America, even Coward had been obliged to face this fact, albeit reluctantly:

> "There seemed already to be an assumption in the champagne American air that Britain had muddled through for the last time, that her former greatness together with her die-hard imperialistic pretensions were flaking off her as dried old paint flakes off a decrepit building. Economically we were done for, and in the general, and in particular the American, view, to be economically done for was the end, or at least the beginning of the end. I do not subscribe to this view any more now than I did in 1943. If, in the next fifty years of wars and revolutions, Great Britain should sink wearily into being economically a third-rate power, so much the worse; but I cannot believe that the quality of its people nor the curious tenacity of its traditions will change."

Or, as Felicity explains to an American visitor in *Relative Values* (1951), "I am afraid that with one thing and another you haven't chosen the best time to come, but we still have quite a lot to be proud of."

At the same time, Coward's own reputation went into a sharp and protracted decline. In part, this was because his work rarely reached the standard of his best pre-1945 efforts. His musicals (*Pacific 1860* and *Ace of Clubs*) could not compete with the more accomplished and fabulously successful works by Rodgers & Hammerstein and Lerner & Loewe. His comedies (*Relative Values* and *Nude With Violin*) were neither as carefully plotted nor as economically written as their pre-War predecessors. His more serious plays (*Peace in Our Time* and *Waiting in the Wings*) were not serious enough. And the second volume of his autobiography was a laboured and not entirely convincing piece of self-justification about his Wartime activities. More than that, Coward also lost his ability to tell the British public what they wanted to hear about themselves. As the spectacular success of the James Bond novels showed, the patriotic, Navy-loving, imperial card could still be played with great popular appeal if suitably presented.[4] But Coward found himself so alienated by developments in England that by the late 1950s he seemed "an irrelevant survival from a bygone era."

TO BEGIN WITH, the combination of revived party politics, protracted austerity and socialist legislation displeased him greatly. "The rigours of peace and post-War party-politics have done much to dim its glow", he noted at the end of his panegyric on Wartime London. "The general decline in

[4] For a discussion of Ian Fleming's England, see my article "James Bond and the Decline of England", in ENCOUNTER, September 1979, pp. 46–55.

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standards and the crushing down of initiative, originality and ambition, the lack of incentive" also offended him. Several of his immediate post-War songs reflected this sense that the England of the 1930s and early '40s which he had so admired was disintegrating. *The Burchells of Battersea Rise* lampooned government, bureaucracy, and socialist state control; *There Are Bad Times Just Around the Corner* sent up the press, the politicians, and the BBC, and protested against social revolution and the Cold War; and in *Don't Let's Make Fun of the Fair*, he did just that, portraying the Festival of Britain as pretentious, expensive, and bound to be unpopular. Two couplets in particular expressed his contemporary disillusionment:

> *Labour leaders lead us all*
> *Though we know they bleed us all.*
>
> *Cheer our new* Decline and Fall
> *Gibbon might have dreamed it all.*

Elsewhere, he articulated these attitudes more fully. The trend towards equality, which for him spelt the end of style, wit, and elegance, received short shrift in *Future Indefinite*:

> "I have always believed more in quality than quantity, and nothing will convince me that the levelling of class and rank distinctions and the contemptuous dismissal of breeding as an important factor in life, can lead to anything but a dismal mediocrity."

This was also the theme of *Relative Values*, in which the intended second wife of the Earl of Marshwood is discovered to be the sister of the family's most devoted servant. The play thus becomes an extended discussion on the regretted decline in hierarchy and social distinctions. "Comedies of manners", we are told with evident regret, "swiftly become obsolete when there are no longer any manners." The most powerful character in the play (Crestwell, the butler) cynically regards the whole idea of equality as nothing but "a spiritually hygenic abstraction" And, using the by-now-familiar Coward technique, it is he who closes the play by proposing this toast: "I drink to the final, glorious disintegration of the most unlikely dream that ever troubled the foolish heart of man—Social Equality."

ANOTHER TREND in the 1950s against which Coward reacted more strongly than before was intellectualism, as he assailed "the so-called high-brows, the artsy-craftsy and the intellectual do-gooders." In *Nude With Violin*, he devoted an entire play to this purpose. Its plot concerned the death of a great modern artist, Paul Sorodin, whose much-acclaimed and very expensive paintings turn out to have been the works of three totally unaccomplished adults and a young boy. An art dealer is savagely criticised as "a pompous, plausible, double-crossing weasel"; "cant, jargon, intellectual snobbism, and the commercialising of creative talent" are also condemned; and in the conclusion, another butler makes another moralising speech, as he considers what might happen if it ever became generally known that Sorodin was a fraud.

> "The whole world of modern painting will be humiliated and impoverished. . . . Thousands of up and coming young artists will starve. . . . If the news leaks out that the great Sorodin's masterpieces were painted by a Russian tart, an ex-Jackson girl, a Negro Eleventh-Hour Immersionist, and a boy of fourteen, the rot will spread like wildfire. Modern sculpture, music, drama and poetry will all shrivel in the holocaust. Tens of thousands of industrious people who today are earning a comfortable livelihood by writing without grammar, composing without harmony, and painting without form, will be flung into abject poverty, or forced really to learn their jobs. Reputations will wither overnight. No one will be spared."

Thus, a large part of Coward's output after 1945—in marked contrast to his earlier work—was devoted to telling the English what was *wrong* with them, What, if anything, remained of England for him to admire? His only sustained answer to that question was *Peace in Our Time* (1947), which speculated on the nature of the British reaction had Hitler invaded successfully in 1940. Predictably, it was a reworking of *Cavalcade* and *This Happy Breed*. The setting was a London pub, presided over by Fred Shattock, another Frank Gibbons figure ("your age-old character, your kindness and firmness and stubborn humour could never let us down"), and the play is a paean of praise to British bravery, humour, fortitude, understatement and to their capacity to muddle through. The climax of the play is the confrontation between Chorley Bannister, a pretentious intellectual who has sold out to the Nazis, and Janet Braid, an ordinary working woman whose son was killed in the Battle of Britain. He ridicules her patriotic sentiments as "a series of outworn slogans." She replies in an impassioned, unanswerable oration, denouncing intellectuals, '30s appeasers and '40s collaborators, reaffirming her faith in England and freedom, cursing Hitler, and giving Chorley "two ringing slaps in the face."

The play was not a success—partly because it was on a subject still too close for comfort, but also because the image of England which it conveyed was somehow too comfortable, too condescending, and too sentimental for the post-War world. Thereafter, Coward never again wrote a

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play in this vein: the seam that began with *Cavalcade* was worked out. In his musicals, *Ace of Clubs* and *After the Ball*, he wrote new songs in praise of London, *Evening in Summer* and *London at Night*. But they did not—and could not—recapture the mood of *London Pride*. So all Coward was left with was a rather breezy collection of platitudes, of which this is a fair example:

> "No people in the world have a better time than the English. . . . They're as merry as grigs, all of them. Obviously, there is a certain amount of poverty and disease and unhappiness, but not nearly as much as in other countries. The Welfare State is doing very nicely thank you."

Even more revealing was his account of Princess Margaret's wedding:

> "Nowhere in the world could such Pomp and Circumstance and Pageantry be handled with such dignity. . . . It was gay, lusty, charming, romantic, splendid, and conducted without a false note. It is still a pretty exciting thing to be English."

For this echo—conscious or unconscious—from his *Cavalcade* speech merely drew attention to Coward's loss of touch with his native land. In the 1930s, the England that Coward loved was broadly-based and popular enough to form the subject of two successful plays; but by the late '50s, there seemed to be only the monarchy left.

SO, ALTHOUGH it cannot be denied that Coward left England in 1956 for financial reasons, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that his departure also reflected a deeper feeling of alienation from his own country which had been developing since the early 1940s. Ever since the '20s, he had been spending much time abroad; he was more away than at home in the Second World War; and he never really settled down in England again thereafter.

In 1944, he visited Jamaica for the first time; four years later, he rented Goldeneye, Ian Fleming's house on the island; shortly after, he built his own house, and became a regular winter resident. In 1956, he sold his London home and his country house in England, and divided his time between Jamaica and Bermuda. Finally, he parted with his Bermuda house and, when not in Jamaica, spent the rest of each year in Switzerland. The decision to leave only added to Coward's unpopularity in the 1950s: it was hard to appear as a man who still believed in England when he had decided to leave it. "There was something rather sad", noted one of the politer press comments, "that the brilliant author of *Cavalcade*, *This Happy Breed* and *In Which We Serve*—all tributes to Britain and the British—should be a self-imposed exile from his own country. . . ."

IN THE LIGHT of all this, it is hardly surprising that Coward now found little positive to say about the English beyond the occasional platitude and expression of admiration for the monarchy. On the other hand, his departure for colonial climes merely reinforced his preoccupation with the Empire, as he devoted a growing amount of his creative effort in these post-War years to his mythical island of Samolo.

He had originally invented it for two of the *Tonight at 8.30* plays, and it reappeared again in *Mr and Mrs Edgehill* during the War. At that time, it was merely a tropical British colony, vaguely located somewhere in the Pacific. But after 1945, he became ever more engrossed in this fantasy island, which increasingly came to resemble Jamaica. He gave it an exact location in the Pacific, provided information about its flora, fauna and rainfall, drew maps of its terrain, and even devised a history of the colony, which went back to the days before the British took it over.

The first sign of this growing imperial obsession was *Pacific 1860*, the musical with which Drury Lane was reopened in 1946. It was an unsuccessful piece, which merely reiterated Coward's familiar views. *His Excellency Regrets*, for example, was another piece of affectionate mandarin mockery in the *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* vein, and there were some more direct expressions of imperial pride:

> *Make way for their Excellencies*
> *Kindly step aside.*
> *They are symbols representing*
> *Sceptre, Crown and mighty race*
> *Gently but firmly ornamenting*
> *This remote but pleasant place.*

At a time when the British were beginning to feel guilty about their Empire, and were indeed on the brink of beginning to dismantle it, such sentiments seemed inappropriate rather than quaint. Nor had Coward, ever more captivated by Jamaica, learned anything from the criticisms levelled at his imperial vision in the Second World War. The natives remained picturesque: there to please Their Excellencies and little more.

In *South Sea Bubble*, a comedy set in contemporary Samolo, this was even more apparent, as the escapism of *Pacific 1860* was combined with the social satire of *Relative Values*. The natives, once more, live in Eden:

> "They sing from morning till night. They weave away and make the most lovely waste paper baskets and never stop having scores of entrancing children. . . . And whenever they feel a bit peckish, all they have to do is to nip a breadfruit off a tree or snatch a yam out of the ground."

To add to this picture of absurd unreality, this "far-flung outpost of empire" remains a "conservative stronghold." Even though the pro-independence party is actively supported by a socialist

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governor, the majority of the population remain unswervingly loyal to Britain:

> "There are some subversive elements, of course, but most Samolans are still Empire minded. You see, they've been happy and contented under British rule for so many years that they just don't understand when they're suddenly told that it's been nothing but a corrupt capitalistic racket from the word go."

So the Samolans are "too young yet" for the "brave experiment" of independence, and prefer their "old nanny" to enduring "unprotected the fearful discomforts of state-controlled democracy which are wrecking western civilisation." Even the attempts by the governor to introduce free public conveniences for all are derided as romantic, Western, utopian folly. "Your conviction", the governor is told, "that extreme socialism necessarily implies progress is romantic to the point of fantasy."

Coward's last extended encounter with Samolo was in a novel sequel to *South Sea Bubble* entitled, revealingly, *Pomp and Circumstance*. Here Coward's absorption in the imperial periphery reached its self-indulgent climax. The novel begins at Government House, ends with the arrival of the Queen and Prince Philip on a state visit to the island, and for much of its length is concerned with the misdemeanours of an English duchess who arrives incognito. Once more, it is Coward's planter society, peopled with admirals and retired civil servants, and figures named Bunny and Bimbo, who spend their time drinking at the club. And the natives are still happy, friendly and entirely contented under British rule:

> "The Samolans are a mild and temperamentally cheerful people; they are uninterested in politics and sensible enough to realise that they are perfectly happy under the aegis of the British. . . . The present agitation, by the Labour party at home, the Russians in Moscow, the Americans in Washington, and the Samolan Socialist National Party here, for Samolo to break free from British rule, and achieve dominion status, has very few supporters in the whole Samolan archipelago."

For many, this novel was merely proof that Coward had "signed off from the real world around him", and taken refuge in an imperial fantasy land, a view which this fervent affirmation of loyalty to the throne tended to reinforce:

> "The crown is a symbol, and as such is, or should be, of tremendous importance. We are used to the tradition of royalty, and have been brought up to believe in it and respect it and love it. I, being thoroughly British and sentimental to the core, would hate to live in a country in which there was no royal pageantry and no chance of seeing the queen pass by. . . . I want the symbol to go on shining, to go on being out of reach, and I am thankful to say that in our country and its colonies and dominions, it still does, in spite of efforts to belittle it."

*Pomp and Circumstance* was Coward's last sustained work as an interpreter of England and her Empire. In the 1960s, he continued to write prolifically, but public veneration of England was less in evidence than for any decade since the 1920s. The content of his work shifted abruptly to such matters as homosexuality, elderly love, old age, infirmity, loneliness and death—problems which he handled with experienced insight and (for the time) remarkable candour.

As a public figure, the decade began with his reputation at a low ebb. To the accumulated failures of the 1950s was added the savage mauling by the critics of *Waiting in the Wings*, and Coward's three articles in *The Observer*, in which he appeared as the embodiment of out-of-date conservatism, assailing the actors, writers and critics of the New Theatre. But then, in the second half of the decade, his early comedies were revived as period pieces, to great critical acclaim; he was

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transformed from embittered exile into Grand Old Man of the English theatre; and a knighthood was bestowed as a 70th-birthday gift—a buoyant finale to his life, which contrasted markedly with his pessimistic creative interests.

But it was not only old age which engendered pessimism. For in the 1960s, it seemed to Coward that England had not merely ceased to conform to that image of it which he had evolved in the 1930s, but was now in the process of stridently rejecting it. He disliked the New Theatre, for example, not only because it was bad theatre, but also because it did not share his own "apolitical" viewpoint. "Most of the young writers of today", he lamented, "are obsessed with left-wing socialism and the grievances of the underprivileged." To Coward, this was misusing the theatre as a place for political propaganda: in fact, it was merely preaching a set of social and political values rather different from his own. At the same time, the dress, demeanour and demonstrations of the young baffled him; there seemed to be little of Frank Gibbons or Fred Shattock in Steptoe or Alf Garnett; and he regretted that "wit, charm and elegance have been forced into temporary eclipse."

So there was little left that he could say about contemporary England. Indeed, in a poem, "Battle of Britain Dinner, 1963", he contrasted the heroism of his own generation with the degeneracy of the young:

*Today in our country, it is the young men who are frightened*
*They write shrill plays about defeat and are hailed as progressives*
*They disdain our great heritage. They have been labelled by their dull*
*Facile contemporaries as "Angry Young Men."*
*But they are not angry, merely scared and ignorant.*
*Many of them are not even English,*
*But humourless refugees from alien lands,*
*Seeking protection in our English sanity*
*And spitting on the valiant centuries*
*That made sanity possible.*

IF THOSE CONSENSUAL, conservative English qualities, which he had found and hymned in the 1930s, and which reached their apotheosis in the Second World War, were in retreat, the British Empire, which he had loved and celebrated with equal fervour and devotion, had all but vanished. By the time "P-&-O 1930" was published in 1967, it was a period piece: the sun *had* set; majesty was no longer invulnerable; and imperial pride was now a nostalgic fantasy. In his last encounter with Samolo, in a grotesque short story of double murder, the sun-lit contented colony which had basked so innocently happy under British rule had been transformed since independence into a nightmare island, in which the old colonial society had vanished, and the natives had become cruel and violent. All that was left—of England and its Empire—was the thrill of monarchy and the glamour of its ceremonial:

*The slow decline of our island race*
*Alien prophets had long foreseen.*
*But still, to symbolise English grace*
*We go to London to look at the Queen.*

*Our far-flung empire imposed new rules*
*And lasted a century or so.*
*Until, engrossed in our football pools*
*We shrugged our shoulders and let it go.*

*But old traditions are hard to kill*
*However battered about they've been,*
*And it's still for some an authentic thrill*
*To go to London to see the Queen.*

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, it is hardly surprising that, in the last decade of his life, Coward had little publicly to say about England. The Empire was dissolved; the Navy much diminished; there seemed to be no Jane Marryots left. Only the monarchy made it "still a pretty exciting thing to be English." But even Coward recognised, in one disillusioned speech in *Waiting in the Wings*, that this was not enough:

"I'm thankful that I'm old and near the end of my time. All the standards are lowered, all the values have changed. There is no elegance, reticence or dignity left.

*Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour—*
*England hath need of thee."*

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# Minimal Beckett

## *By Roger Scruton*

I CANNOT think without thinking about something, or feel without feeling towards something. And I exist as a subject only to the extent that I think and feel. The subject seems crucially to depend upon the object which is the focus of its attention. But what is this object? It exists in my thoughts; but my thoughts give me no reason to believe that anything exists outside them. The object exists, therefore, because the subject thinks it. Subject and object exist in precarious interdependence, joined by the mysterious relation of "about." But what then *is* the subject? Nothing can be said about it, and every attempt to imprison it in words leads to exhaustion. You can catalogue the objects observed, but you never get to the subject who observes them. So what *are* you cataloguing? Not, in fact, the objects, but only the impression of them. Impressions belong to a subject; the object remains undescribed, and indescribable. Subject and object constantly elude each other's grasp, and this "aboutness" which seems to denote the most intimate of possible relations, and also the complete absence of every possible relation, is nothing more than a contradiction.

That conundrum has been the spur to a great philosophical ambition. It provided the unifying motive behind all German idealism, dictating now the "transcendental subject" of Kant, now the "universal ego" of Fichte, now the "will and representation" into which Schopenhauer partitioned the world. Subject and object stalk each other through the works of 19th-century philosophers. They have close encounters: in Hegel's *Phenomenology* the one is briefly master, and the other slave. For the most part, however, they keep their distance, and are still to be found circling each other unreconciled in the works of Husserl and Heidegger. In Sartre they make another attempt to live together, and end up like some ill-matched old couple, cheerlessly and tediously denouncing the self-contradictory nature of their relations.

Nietzsche dismissed the old conundrum as a tissue of lies and illusions, woven by the "catastrophic spider" Kant. But Nietzsche also said that human fulfilment lies in discovering the illusion which fortifies the will to power. An illusion upon which so many generations have built their ordinary, decent, inauthentic existence ought not to be dismissed so disdainfully. And besides, who is doing the disdaining, if not a subject? and what, if not the object, is disdained? Even Nietzsche is condemned to think "about" what he condemns.

When a writer turns away from the social world, almost invariably it is in order to climb the rainbow of "about" and creep towards its unknowable extremities. If he turns towards the object, then, like Kafka, he becomes lost in the obsessive investigations of a dog or a land-surveyor, overcome by the infinite inaccessibility and inscrutable concreteness of "other" things. This way lies anxiety and eventual madness. If, on the other hand, the writer turns his gaze towards the subject, then he becomes lost in nothing, or rather (to do it metaphysical justice) in Nothing. He is in the position of one attempting to observe his own gaze. That way lies silence, but also, as Samuel Beckett shows us—and it is Beckett's major achievement—a kind of pathos.

To reach the end of this path is not just hard, it is strictly impossible. But the pure subject can be approached by degrees, by the artistic equivalent of Hegel's "labour of the negative." It is necessary to pare away all relationships, and indeed the very language of relations, so as to leave the "I" alone at the centre, or periphery, of the stage. Or rather, not the "I", but (to borrow one of Beckett's titles) Not I. The theme is already broached in the trilogy of novels (*Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*, 1951–53):



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> "Do they believe I believe it is I who am speaking? That's theirs too. To make me believe I have an ego all my own, and can speak of it, as they of theirs. Another trap to snap me up among the living. It's how to fall into it that they can't have explained to me sufficiently . . . ."

And:

> "Enough of this first person, it is really too red a herring. I'll get out of my depth if I'm not careful . . . ."

But into whose depth, then, is the Unnamable trying to sink? He remarks that "any old pronoun will do, provided one sees through it", but who is this "one" who is doing the seeing, and what does he see? In *All Strange Away* (1976) Beckett invents a new grammatical case to contrast with the first person as its final opposite:

> "Light off and let him be, on the stool, talking to himself, in the last person, murmuring, no sound, Now where is he, no, Now he is here . . . ."

And the mouth in *Not I* (1973) reaches moments of hysterical climax at which it forces itself, with the true chastity that overcomes desire, to resist the first person case. At these moments the observing figure makes a movement. This movement, Beckett says, in his notes to the play:

> "consists in simple sideways raising of arms from sides, and their falling back, in a gesture of helpless compassion. It lessens with each recurrence till scarcely perceptible at third. There is just enough pause to contain it as MOUTH recovers from vehement refusal to relinquish third person."

In the novels, this refusal of the first person is effected also by the constant renaming of the characters, and the narrator's positing of himself as identical with the characters he creates, or not, according to whim. The fiction thereby becomes intertwined with the self of the narrator, and the self becomes a fictional artifact, the "narrator narrated" in Beckett's words.

On one reading, the trilogy might be taken as a kind of extended satire on the human disposition to believe in the existence of the "I", to assume that it is the true repository of value, the fount of life. With a charming pun, the Unnamable sums up centuries of human frailty: "But can that be called a life which vanishes when the subject is changed? I don't see why not." Naturally, "I" can never see why not, since while the "I" persists the subject has not changed—or if it has, this is a fact which cannot be perceived from "my" point of view. At the same time, in the early works, the emotional pressure of the prose pushes in another direction, towards the view which persists beneath Sartre's cynicism, of the self as the true individual existent, the infinitely valuable thing which we can know as subject, but never as object, and which is the only thing which ultimately matters, or minds.

BUT EVEN IN the early work, Beckett has been avid for the poignancy which lies, he believes, not in the self, but behind it, in the pure, pared-away perspective from which the transcendental subject surveys the inexistent world. In recent work he has attempted to approach this poignancy more directly, balancing on the illusory arc of "aboutness", so as to divine the strange substance from which it is composed. Already in the trilogy he hints at an answer: the "foul feeling of pity", says Malone, "that I have often felt in the presence of things, especially little portable things in wood or stone. . . ." And it becomes steadily clearer in the plays and playlets that Beckett's subject is the "helpless compassion" referred to in *Not I*. In order to approach this sentiment more nearly, Beckett has composed theatrical pieces in which the subject, by providing his own object, contrives to vanish from the scene. Thus Krapp, who listens to himself on tape, strategically prevents his voice from exposing it(him)self:

> "TAPE: . . . What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely—(KRAPP *switches off impatiently, winds tape forward, switches on again*)—great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind-gauge spinning like a propeller, clear to me at last that the dark I have always struggled to keep under is in reality my most—(KRAPP *curses, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again*)—unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire—(KRAPP *curses louder, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again*)—my face in her breasts my hand. . . ."

Thus, by editing himself, Krapp removes himself from the stage. At the same time, his relation to the world is reduced to a suffering absence of relation, in which he himself, or rather, he unselfed, is the single term. A voice of pure lyrical suffering speaks from the tape, carefully choosing words in which the idea of "about" is tenderly cradled, even though there is neither subject nor object to which it can be attached.

*Krapp's Last Tape* (1959) is a step away from the tragicomedy of *Endgame* (1957). But it does not achieve the lyricism of the new playlet, *Rockaby*, presented this winter at the Cottesloe Theatre, in an accomplished performance by Billie Whitelaw.

An old lady rocks quietly in her rocking-chair, while her own, perhaps younger, voice speaks into

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the auditorium, longing for another human soul, another individual, a creature like me. The voice remembers a room with an only window, from which the woman looked out on to "other only windows", where the blinds were drawn. The image is developed with considerable subtlety, exploiting every verbal nuance (as in that "only"). The impression is created of an ineffable gentleness of semi-contact. The window, which frames all experience, also lets through the "helpless compassion" of "about." Billie Whitelaw, as she overhears, or underhears, the words, conveys suffering, and also calm. Her face remains unmoving, like a perfect Noh mask, borrowing its expression from the words which pass over it like mobile shadows.[1] Every now and then the voice refers to another. It pauses on two unexplained words—"Whom else?" The grammatical weight of the phrase is enormous. The other is inaccessible ("else"); at the same time he cannot exist as a subject. He is never more than object for me; always only "whom."

The few words uttered by the protagonist, in chorus with the voice, predict her eventual cessation—although, whenever the voice fades, the woman calls plangently for "more." At last, however, she acquiesces, ceases her rocking, and allows her head to fall slowly forwards. The simple image is extraordinarily effective. Although there is, in a sense, no person to whom the feeling of release is attached, that too is part of Beckett's meaning. The woman's voice, her *principium individuationis*, evaporates; with it evaporates the futile contrast between subject and object. The thought is Schopenhauer's, but it has been clear since Beckett's early monograph on Proust that Schopenhauer is, for him, the preferred interpreter of the metaphysical conundrum of the self.

The theme of self and other is, in fact, the master theme of modern literature. We are told that we must treat others not as means but as ends. Only thus, argued the catastrophic spider Kant, can we see them as subjects. Hegel attempted to show the catastrophe involved in the attempt to treat another as object alone: the catastrophe experienced one way by the master, and another way by the slave, in the cruel contradiction that binds them. Beckett displays Hegel's master and slave in *Waiting for Godot*, in the characters of Pozzo and Lucky; and here, we see, is a kind of drama. By contrast, the pure Kantian understanding between the tramps negates all drama. In its lyrical pathos, its infinite hesitation and vulnerability, it already anticipates Beckett's later attempts to "eff the ineffable." To observe the subject is also to negate him. The subject retreats before every gesture. Since he can never be object, he must elude every compassion that is not purely "helpless." *Rockaby* is the final point of this pilgrimage towards the ineffable. What can Beckett now do, but repeat himself, discovering new ways of avoiding the self who repeats?

IT SEEMS, HOWEVER, that he has more to show us about the "catastrophe" of Lucky and Pozzo. A remarkable festival was held last summer in Avignon, under the title *Une Nuit pour Vaclav Havel*, organised by the *Association Internationale de Défense des Artistes* (AIDA). Several writers contributed pieces dedicated to their imprisoned Czech colleague, who is presently serving six years hard labour for having felt too strongly the compassion for humanity which finds a voice, of sorts, in *Rockaby*. Beckett's contribution to the festival was called *Catastrophe*. The central character, the protagonist in an unspecified play, remains completely silent, while a producer, his assistant, and a lighting engineer prepare him for display. The others circle the protagonist, barking out orders, taking notes, occasionally adjusting his posture. The protagonist merely trembles slightly, his head bowed; gradually the petulant instructions of the producer confer on him the pathos which they seem designed to negate.

At one point the assistant lifts the protagonist's hat. "*Le sinciput te plaît?*" she asks. "*Faudra blanchir*", is the laconic reply. The assistant drops the hat, and, taking her notepad, records "*Blanchir crâne.*" In business-like tones the protagonist is returned to the "catastrophe" of Lucky and Pozzo. However, beside the brusque tyranny of the producer, one senses also the helpless compassion of the assistant, who can do nothing but obey. In her eyes, we feel, the protagonist remains a feeling subject, a perspective on the world which contains her. Hence, for her, he retains his intolerable value, as that inaccessible something about which nothing can ever be said. Eventually silence triumphs, as in every Beckett play. One senses, then, the truth in the producer's closing words: "*Il va faire un malheur. J'entends ça d'ici.*"

It is just such a *malheur* that the Czech state has prepared for itself. Havel made the mistake of refusing to think of his countrymen as objects, of calling to them in their "other only windows" over which the blinds are drawn. This obviously was the act of a reckless criminal, and he deserved to be enslaved. But, as Beckett shows, nothing can compensate for the loss of the subjective perspective, the loss of compassion. To lose compassion is to lose "aboutness", and so to lose the world. Slavery is the greatest defeat for the enslaver, since he thereby puts himself beyond dominion. That is the *malheur* which Beckett's producer foretells, and which Beckett condemns so eloquently in all his recent plays.

[1] See Yasunadri Takahashi, "The Theatre of Mind: Samuel Beckett and the Noh", ENCOUNTER, April 1982.

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# NOTES & TOPICS

*Letter from Taiwan*

# Paper Flower Power

## *By Edward Pearce*

LONDON LETTERS must occasionally move on castors or on jets, and circumstances find me seeing the world as it seems in Taipei and Kaoshung, the two principal cities of Taiwan. Taipei is the capital; tropical Kaoshung is an amalgamation of Sheffield, Newcastle, and an orchidaceous Kent. At a time when uncharity of an alarming sort towards the thriving and creative Far East is flourishing in Europe and the United States, when one has heard a Tory MP, one of the more besotted sacramental Europeans, talk during his Party Conference about the need for "Europe" to contemplate protection against Asian competition while continuing to argue for the grand futility of aid, perhaps a view of the world from Taiwan is a salutary corrective.

Most people think of that country in terms of the ubiquitous little stamp which appears on the underside of toys, calculators, and a thousand other appliances. *Made in Taiwan*, it says quietly. Personally I have this archaic notion (which I thought the founders of the EEC shared) that free trade is good for us—good for the seller, of course, and good for the buyer of the cheapest, most efficiently produced article. But because the Japanese are themselves such unfree-traders, blocking goods by subterfuge instead of by tariff, even that certainty is slightly bruised.

Taiwan has had at best an indifferent press, coloured by recollections of the rhetoric of the Dulles era, and by an instinctive and unwarranted willingness to believe any good thing of the Mainland if it smiled at us. It really does require to be said that Taiwan is a quite admirable country; that it has turned all its economic chances to account; that poor people have grown appreciably richer; and that, without being a textbook democracy, it is essentially a free country. Above all, that peculiar chemistry which seems to function when ethnic Chinese and capitalism are left alone together with no one to play gooseberry enables them to do all the usual things . . . at speed.

The first thing you see in the outer rim streets of Taipei is a succession of shields or targets, patterned with paper flowers, mounted on tripods, and set on the pavement. What are they all in aid of? One of these is set up and kept in place for a few weeks to mark the opening of a new shop. That is at once melancholy and inspiriting if you have walked through the blind-eyed, boarded-over former shopping streets of a city like Glasgow. Paradoxically, official Taiwanese persons have mixed feelings about the phenomenon. "It is one of the signs of recession that if companies contract, the workers like to become traders." Quite so, and trading seems to run in the Chinese like blood. Their selling grounds—closely packed covered markets—remind me of a cleaner and more peaceable version of every picture I have ever seen of 18th-century London. The clichés about Chinese industry and trading instincts are clichés only because they are true. Taiwan could not have turned herself into the small comet of productivity and exports which she is without a scurrying and demanding home market, without the optimism which makes industrial workers become traders and then industrial workers again.

No one looking at the Taiwan of the late 1940s and early '50s with its hyperinflation (subsequently dealt with in a thoroughly monetarist way) would have imagined such possibilities. Conventional wisdom expected a lame and needy pensioner of the US, an embarrassment to us all, a state which clearly would have a more hopeful future incorporated into the planned economy of the mainland. The same conventional wisdom still sees great markets and (more realistically) greater diplomatic grandeur in total devotion to Peking and the application of the frozen shoulder to Taipei.

It is rational to recognise Peking as the ruler of the Mainland. It is not rational to close down your consulate in Taipei in order to get the chargé d'affaires in Peking upped to Ambassador. And it is quite irrational to have no official Trade Delegation in a country with which, in the first ten months of 1982, we had a $210 million deficit! The unofficial trade delegation may well be—probably is—more efficient than an official one, but that can hardly have been the intention of the Foreign Office. I felt moved to sympathy with that member of Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet who had muttered under his breath, and nonattributably, that in Japan the Trade Ministry ranks second and the



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Foreign Office eighteenth, and that maybe that fact explained a lot of things.

CERTAINLY THE ARGUMENT that we have large, self-interested reasons for nuzzling up to the Mainland and treating Taiwan like an un-nation, does not stand up. The big orders we have been expecting to get from Peking depend, to put it crudely, on her having the money—and, in economic terms, the Mainland is paralysed. It is the ultimate humilation of Marxism-Leninism that in the Chinese-speaking world it has been tested in a monster laboratory, while capitalism has been tried out, perhaps fortunately, in three little sheds: Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. The laboratory has seen a combination of successive explosions and clinical sterility. The sheds are selling to the world.

It is of course unfair to speak of the handsome island of Taiwan as a shed. It sits upon the Tropic of Capricorn, and the steelyards and dry-docks of Kaoshung are approached by way of sugar-cane, tobacco, and banana plantations. Indeed, it is almost precisely on the latitude of Cuba, and has had only ten years more as an experimental station for an ideology. Taiwan had a great deal of American aid; Cuba is Russia's principal overseas undertaking. Some very cruel comparisons could be made, but they must not distract us from the Far Eastern context. For the staggering fact is that Taiwan, the size of Holland and containing a population one five-hundredth that of the Mainland, actually exports more than the other China.

But then it is an astonishing economy. Between 1971 and 1981 real GNP increased from $19,856 million to $46,164 million. In the same period, sales of textiles abroad have risen sevenfold, electrical machinery sales sixteen-fold, metal products eighteen, and plastics (from a smaller base) thirty-two. The term "developing country" is used so often and with so much high-octane humbug to describe countries which are either backward or even regressing that no one has the right to complain about a country which actually does develop. But having no right will not stop people complaining, and some of those who have instant recourse to hectoring piety on the subject of an aid not uncommonly spent on stadiums and superfluous national airlines, and misapplied where it is not actually misappropriated, mutter resentfully about "cheap labour" when a poor country actually makes its way and comes with a long competitive edge to the market.

FOR A START, cheap labour is the beginning of the long march out of poverty, the only long march worth undertaking. It is the asset of a poor country in the way that vines are an asset of Italy, except that it does not last for so long. For a country like Taiwan is moving out of the cheap-textiles—low-wage-costs era as a direct consequence of its success. "If you want to see a country roughly where we were in 1965, you should look at Malaysia", said one Taiwanese.

The preoccupation of the sophisticated and temperate men who run Taiwan's small, crisp, meritocratic civil service is with ever-higher technology. Cheap textiles were a booster rocket (made effective not just by wage costs, but by readiness to make capital investment); but once you have done a Rostow and achieved take-off, capital intensity becomes a first requirement, and entry into the most sophisticated market of all—information technology—is required. At the Hsinchu Park settlement for science-based industry, such things as the Dragon Code, which has adapted the Chinese written character with painful effort to the needs of the computer so that it can think in Chinese, are under way. And they are urgently encouraged to function by the government, which has a passion for economic free zones. Here the levies of modern government are withheld, for these are areas with five-year tax holidays, rate and rent oblivion—provided that you come and invest.

In the same way the Taiwanese operate a species of free port in three areas. Known as Economic Processing Zones, they are looked upon with peculiar pride as effective mechanisms to aid a sophisticated, export-led economy. What impressed me most was an extraordinary lack of complacency, whether among entrepreneurs, managers, or civil servants. The record since the 1950s has been a brilliant one. But the preoccupation seems always to be with the next stage. They are of course blessed, as the Manchester men and the *rentiers* who lived off them were not, with the knowledge that low-wage textile production is only a precondition for growth (and a wasting one), not an annuity to be jogged along with. Karl Kraus called Vienna a laboratory for the destruction of mankind. Britain, as the first industrialiser, has been something of an R & D station for the world on what goes wrong if you don't respond commercially to each new innovation as it comes along. From the Germans of a hundred years ago to the Taiwanese of today, people have been learning from us.

TAIWAN'S OTHER PIECE of good fortune is that, largely for political reasons, she has sorted out her rural problems. Precisely because the Mainlanders who came here after their defeat by Mao needed very badly to win over the indigenous Taiwanese peasantry, they instituted one of the

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most radical and thoroughgoing programmes of land reform and redistribution ever seen. Tom Paine and Feargus O'Connor would have given a low whistle of delight could they have seen it.

Perhaps because the local landlords had no old-boy ties with the mainland Kuomintang men then setting up their *ad hoc* state, the rural landowning class first had its rents frozen and was then forced into compulsory sale at a rate of 2.5 times the standard annual yield (although market values of land ranged between 5 and 8 times the standard annual yield). The equivalent of 13% of the country's GDP at that time was simply redistributed. Those of us who watch the cool rapacity of European landowners, who have income redistributed *to them* by way of food made statutorily expensive, can only look on, wonder, and applaud.

In the process the local peasantry, who had no special loyalties to the Kuomintang, were transformed into the Chartists' dream of small proprietors. That had always been an honourable, a noble dream in spite of the dis-economies of scale. And of course dis-economies of scale do not operate if you are replacing a *latifundia* system of large, neglectful, absentee landlordism. The new peasant owner with just over a *chia* (0.97 hectares) of land brought about a 78% increase in production over twelve years.

Taiwanese food production is intended preponderantly, in the best Cobdenite fashion, for Taiwanese workers. The whole operation, a magnificent piece of classical radicalism, provided comparatively cheap food for industrial workers and won the tenant farmers to willing acceptance of a form of government which turned them into owner-cultivators. The contrast with the Mainland speaks for itself. But so does the contrast with those melancholy countries where some form of *latifundia* continues.

Taiwan is a profoundly instructive country for the so-called Third World. Her industrial achievements may not be open to everybody, since not everybody in the Third World is an ethnic Chinese! Talent, flair, and aptitude, however racialist as notions, do have application. But what Taiwan did agriculturally—the restructuring of landholding, the creation of peasant owners—is the great unenacted reform of much of the world. Central America, to take a single, large example, has vast *haciendas*, landless peasants, famine, and the prospect of Communist rule. If the US really did have power in that part of the world instead of being the hapless accepter of régimes out of a Spanish medieval midnight, like those in El Salvador and Guatemala, she would have a simple course to pursue. What her *protégé* of the 1950s, Taiwan, has wrought in the countryside could be done again. The logic of the prairie has no application in a densely populated area of rural catastrophe. If there are to be no more Cubas and Guatemalas, the grip of great landowners must be broken. A peasant with a couple of acres is both a more efficient producer and a sounder conservative than a *latifundista*.

BUT PERHAPS WE ARE MAKING impossible comparisons. Central America, Costa Rica honourably excepted, is governed by the primitive gangsters which the Spanish colonial world so readily throws up. Taiwan is ruled by mild, preoccupied technocrats, in whom the expertise of the West (what the 17th-century Japanese used to call Dutch knowledge) and the innate gifts of the Chinese people are splendidly combined. Yet the men who have triumphed on Taiwan, and who have made superlative progress in three decades, are the heirs of men who failed to keep the act together on the Mainland.

Size comes into it, of course. Arguably *nobody* can govern the billion souls on the Mainland. Certainly the record of the Communists, all crimes and cruelties apart, has been one of sustained and systematic failure. But the men who fled to an offshore island—as Koxinga, the last Ming warrior, had done nearly 300 years before—had learnt something. They knew what landless men the world over wanted more than salvation. And they saw in the possession of land by the peasantry the condition precedent to getting anything else right. Having made that step they were able to roll forward to all the other things—the textiles, the shipyards and steel-works, the beginnings of high technology.

All the intelligent policies of free ports and industrial zones, of shaping the economy to attract maximum foreign investment, became possible and relevant only after the righting 30 years ago of an ancient wrong—the estrangement of the worker from the land on which he worked. Free ports and high-oxygen furnaces are the wisdom of the '60s and '70s, the Dragon Code for computers a contribution to the '90s, but the liberation of the peasants by the "Land to the Tiller" legislation is something for which men were crying out in the 13th century, and for which in great parts of the world they cry still. In the Poor World they are afflicted by either the Collective Farm or the Hacienda, two barely distinguishable mechanisms for repression. The sophisticated and creative civil servants of the Taipei Government have proved to be what Mao's followers once claimed to be—agrarian reformers. . . .

Whatever the heat of competition (and Taiwan is a willing importer to whom I am convinced we could sell very much more), all of the little dragons of Asia (in Herman Kahn's phrase), encompassing Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong,

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are countries to be cherished on practical, utilitarian grounds. They vary in their liberties, from the severity of South Korea to the anarcho-capitalism of Hong Kong. But they have all made their people richer, and specifically their poorer people. Taiwan, which I can speak about best, has a notable humanity. The Chinese are good workers but they are not robotic. They have as much inclination for a quick drag and a cup of tea as the next nation. Yet they have struck a steady fast rate, with the Government operating like a 10,000-metre-runner's coach, thinking ahead to the next circuit.

To diplomats in Western Europe Taiwan is a nuisance, an obstacle to constructive dialogue with "the real China" and, in the protectionist spirit of most Foreign Offices, an unacceptably efficient competitor. (Odd, is it not, that no one needs to complain about the economic strength of the Mainland.) Left to herself, Taiwan will achieve a great deal more. It is desirable that she should never be left to the mercy of the diplomacy which already denies her existence. She is too good an example of what capitalism can achieve, and too nice a country to be stabbed to death with cocktail sticks.

# The Clash of Generations

## *Dissenting from a Myth—By ALAIN TOURAINE*

WHAT IS called "conventional wisdom", or our own *idées reçues*, has it that the greater the speed of social change, the sharper the clash between the generations. Is it not obvious that the young are absorbing less and less of the cultural legacy of the past, that they live in the present (and, perhaps, in the future), and are striving to shake off the habits of traditional ways of life? Is it not a matter of common observation that young people everywhere give short shrift to the advice and authority of their elders, whether parents or teachers, that they want to lead a "different kind of life", that they are no longer ready or willing to submit themselves to the old constraints and principles? And by the same token, is it not generally clear that older people are finding it increasingly difficult to adapt to rapid changes and to a living pace which is much too taxing, especially in the great urban conurbations?

It would be easy to spin out the compilation of these matters of "common knowledge", for the clash of generations has been a well-worn theme throughout the post-War decades. It has propped up conversations, filled many a screen and stage, and spawned best-sellers by the score. And yet not only is the theme quite unsupported by the facts, it is also based upon a total misconception. It takes no French love of paradox to argue instead that few societies have witnessed so quiet a clash of generations as our own, which coincides with the great period of post-War growth. In fact it is a mistake, in my view, to think that social change *per se* is bound to give rise to trouble with the rising generation. In order for such conflicts to emerge, social and cultural change has to be perceived as strictly supervised by the generation of the "parents", so that change appears as a break with standards and with forms of social organisation which are consciously maintained and which respond to attack with generational sanctions and parental punishments. The more a society is voluntarist, the more it clearly proclaims its values and norms, and the more its processes are openly managed by institutions possessing real authority, the stronger are the clashes between the generations, whatever the tempo of social change may happen to be.

What shows this most clearly today is the contrast between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe. In the West, change is defined in an impersonal manner: it is modernisation, the development of mass consumption, technical innovation, and even of gadgetry. In the East it is all a matter of command decision and central planning, the prerogative of State and Party, which impose their own overall concept on the whole of social life. The result is that in the East nearly all conflicts appear as "generational conflicts."

Just as the political leadership of the Soviet Union is in the image of a gerontocracy, in the countries of Eastern Europe, as a whole, central power is in the hands of a bureaucratic machine and a *nomenklatura* which can be identified with a generation of mature men, strong, wise, powerful elders, whereas youth is seen as an age which is

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still irresponsible, not having had the experience of a career, hierarchy, submission to the norm and to the central power. In the Poland of 1980–81, totally involved in a vast movement to liberate society from totalitarianism, most of the organisers of the *Solidarity* movement were young, some of them very young. All the evidence goes to show that in the Baltic shipyards, for example, it was quite clearly the youthful workers who led the strikes and took the main initiatives. This contrast of behaviour between young and old is constantly mentioned by both sides.

FOR QUITE DIFFERENT reasons, some sharp conflicts of generations can also be seen in rural society in Western Europe. The system of small farm holdings leads to conflict between the father who owns and manages his land, and the son who can only take the initiative with the retirement or death of the father. Often the son spends a very long time trapped in a situation of extreme economic and social dependence; often, too, violent conflicts break out between father and son. Lastly, most of the initiatives in the direction of cooperative work, at the level of buying machinery or marketing products, are the work of the younger men. It is no accident that the transformation of the rural scene in France has come about mainly through the efforts of a movement called the *Centre National des Jeunes Agriculteurs*.

Conversely, in Western countries there has been very little supervision of social change, especially in the urban scene. Generally speaking, the world of things and techniques has had the better of the world of principles, plans, and decision-makers. The result is that since social change does not appear to be contrived by one group against another, all groups—and in particular the young and the old—feel that they are being propelled on a tide of change which it seems beyond them to influence. They may have had different responses, but neither group has questioned the other's intentions. That there have been kinds of behaviour characteristic of the young is a truism; but whereas their behaviour can be defined—positively or negatively—in relation to cultural and economic transformations, they cannot be defined in relation to a special social category which could be termed a "generation." On the contrary, it is striking to observe how far the acceleration in transforming life-styles has been associated with the theme of "permissiveness", in other words with the relaxation of standards. Western societies have seen a considerable weakening of constituted authority in favour of the attraction (for good or ill) of money and consumption.

MORE GENERALLY, sociological studies demonstrate the superficial, indeed arbitrary character of the "generations" theme. It is not true that the young all behave in the same way, as if their membership of an age category automatically erased all the social differences among them. Whether in the field of consumption, professional life, or family relations, there are differences between social spheres which remain fundamental. Likewise it is artificial to talk about old people or "senior citizens" or what we in France call *le troisième âge*. On the contrary, what needs stressing is the extent to which behaviour in retirement is and continues to be determined by the nature of the working life. Those who have been able to accumulate not only an economic but above all a professional and cultural "capital" have a capacity to use the free time of retirement which differentiates them from those who, after a lifetime of unskilled, repetitive, debilitating work, experience retirement as a void and an exclusion.

SO IT MUST BE CONCLUDED that (in France, in particular) the so-called "generation gap" has been extremely narrow, probably much more so than in previous times. The observation might even be extended to assert a contrast between our own and previous eras. One of the classic sources of innovation in Western society has been the accepted and sometimes even orchestrated rebellion of the "new generation" against old constraints. It is a notion practically built into the language that authoritarian education forges character and strengthens initiative. Thus the war of the generations has traditionally been seen in Europe as one of the mainsprings of social change. Today, in my view, that is no longer the case; on the contrary it is the autonomy of personality, the weakness of the constraints brought to bear upon it, and openness and adaptation to real changes in the environment, that constitute the factors in our culture which are favourable to change.

If the clash of generations does appear to be a real factor—say, in Western Germany, as it is not in France—it is not for the reason usually invoked. The younger German generation senses that its predecessor has exerted deliberate control over the collective memory, and has deliberately kept quiet about the Nazi period and the crimes then committed in the name of the German people. It is because the unsaid is not allowed to be said, because there is a calculated policy of dissimulation, that younger Germans feel a constant need to distance themselves from a generation which remains scarred, no matter how particular individuals may have behaved, by crimes which are put still further beyond atonement by being consigned to oblivion and silence.

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THE "clash of generations", when and if it does emerge, has to make a direct impact on the milieux in which social and cultural standards are passed on from one generation to the next. In our own societies there are three main areas of socialisation: Family, Church, and School.

In the case of France—but also in those of Italy, Spain, Southern Germany and part of Belgium and the Netherlands—the Roman Catholic Church has been a very powerful formative influence in society. Now in the space of a few decades it is possible to speak of the disappearance of Christendom—taking the word in the sense given by the historian Jean Delumeau, who contrasts it with "Christianity": the latter is a body of beliefs and religious practices; by Christendom, Delumeau means a social life organised by religious standards and values. In the French case in particular, the collapse of this Christendom, the stark decline in religious observance, and the questioning of religious categories in civil life, all these might have provoked a violent clash of generations, since the abandoning of Christendom naturally tended to stem from the young.

Yet no such thing has happened. On the contrary, it is striking to see with what relative ease the Roman Catholic Church and Catholic adult organisations have been able to accept and manage this transformation. The social milieux which have stood out against this great movement towards secularisation are not to be categorised by age, and indeed it has very often been younger elements who have clung to more fundamentalist positions. I need hardly point out that bishops and priests are by definition adults, and may well be old men. Since the liquidation of Christendom has been presided over by the Church itself, it has been under the guidance of men who were not particularly young; and consequently the young have had no need to make any decisive intervention. On the contrary, it is true to say that Young Christian movements have exerted only a slight influence, and more so outside the religious domain than within it.

AS FOR THE FAMILY, psychologists first point to the collapse of the father image. There exists no rebellion against the father, because before any rebellion the image of the father grows weaker, particularly by comparison with the image of the mother. Recent studies have shown that women, and particularly feminists, were more and more defining themselves in relation to the image of their mother, and less and less in relation to the image of a man, be he husband or father. What has been called the trend towards *unisex* is only a vague reflection of this basic fact, which is augmented by the growing importance of milieux of social equality as the creators of norms. The young receive their norms from other young people, from groups of the same age, and no longer from the previous generation.

Furthermore, the so-called nuclear family, rather than disappearing, has gained a new lease of life as an area of intimacy, a shield for private life, and also an area of consumption. The family moves about by car, gathers together round the television set, and sets up holidays on the same camp site. The longer duration of educational studies keeps a growing number of young people financially dependent on the family (particularly in France, where till now assistance to students has been given in the form not of individual grants but of tax concessions for parents whose children are at school or college). More recently, it has been commonly observed with how little friction the young unemployed will go on living at home, or even move back in again with the family. It might have been imagined that financial dependence would be hard to swallow, and that forced cohabitation would give rise to violent family squabbles. This is not the picture that is now emerging, which shows instead that there are plenty of young people who say that they are happy to go on living at home, even in their twenties, in families which have become very permissive, and where they also find shelter against a hostile social environment.

THE SITUATION at School is utterly different, confirming the line of reasoning I have suggested above. In fact the standards of school life remain clearly defined and supervised by the education system. Pupils therefore feel that they are up against no provisional state of affairs, or shifting material situation, but against a will affirmed and imposed by the whole social body. That is why the conflicts inside the educational world are violent, and become all the more frequent as the trend to "democratisation" continues, in other words with the widening of the contradiction between the massive and multifarious world of the pupils and the corporate body of teachers with their attachment to a relatively élitist image of traditional culture. It is above all in the middle levels of education, the secondary or junior high schools, that conflict is in the open. On the other hand it is worth while recalling that in the French universities *les événements* of May 1968 involved next to no outright aggression towards the teachers. It was not till the strikes of 1976, a setback which marked the end of *gauchisme*, that this hostility broke out.

IT MAY BE ARGUED that the transition from growth to crisis is likely to revive the conflicts of generations, and that the very reasons which

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explain their weakness in the years of rapid growth and an open society are the grounds for anticipating the outbreak of new conflicts in the years to come.

What supports this hypothesis is the astonishing reversal which has occurred in the relations between the generations. Those who refer to the "conflict of generations" readily imagine young people identified with progress clashing with more traditionalist or reactionary adults or old people. It is practically the opposite which is happening today. The generation which grew up after the War identified itself with change, modernisation, and industrialisation. That generation is conscious of having done a lot of hard work and a lot of reconstruction, and its lack of real traditionalism comes from having inherited the rubble of a world in ruins. By contrast, the young generation which now finds itself in a position of crisis has no special individual or political perspectives, distrusts both intellectuality and pragmatism, falls back on private, immediate experience, is more interested in happiness than success, and rejects the values of industrial society. The main conflict likely to break out in these circumstances would be between an older generation talking in terms of collective life—the advantages of progress, the nation's needs, changing social ideals—and a younger generation which distrusts these big words and all the varieties of bandwagons, and whose concern is with finding work on the one hand, and on the other with seeking in private life a happiness which seems more and more foreign to the requirements and objectives of public life and, in particular, of production. But here we are really dealing not so much with a conflict of generations as with the withdrawal of one section of the young from the organisation of collective life. This critique of social life even leads, as we have seen, to a strengthening of private life and, often, of family relations.

IN MOST OF WESTERN EUROPE the adult public is seeking to rediscover its roots, the link with past generations, a vanishing rural civilisation, even the soil. The reactions of the young are not essentially different; they lay still more importance on the search for closeness, *la recherche de l'intimité* and consequently they steer clear of any criticism of a generation which is their parents' own. Whereas in the previous period all the generations were caught up in a vast movement towards modernisation and affluence, at the present moment the word generation itself refers to categories of private life; and it is private life as a whole which finds itself distanced from public life and in opposition to it. Public life is becoming more and more strictly the management of an economic


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system in crisis. There is very little talk nowadays of the problems of youth, or of age; all the talk is of jobs, and therefore the defence of specific qualities in the experience of the young or the old can only be expressed in private terms; for large references to social reforms or changing values look more and more empty.

In this sense it is possible to talk about the reappearance of a youth culture which is seen in particular in the ecological and anti-nuclear movements, movements of withdrawal rather than of criticism, but in any case not defined through targeted opposition to the parents' generation or the adult world.

It must, therefore, be concluded that "the conflict of generations" is an illusion, and that it is an unhistorical notion especially ill-suited to our type of society and culture. Whether we live in a time of growth or of crisis, the relations between generations have been growing indirect, for between parents and children there intervenes the enormous world of consumption, economic organisation, and governmental policy.

THE SOCIETIES STUDIED BY anthropologists are dominated by the categories of age and sex. Distinctions between young and old, or men and women, are the most useful means of understanding their forms of social organisation. But those categories which once were public are becoming private at the same time as public life is more and more subordinated to great forces or trends which can no longer be directly detected in the consciousness of individuals. The conflict of generations is disappearing, to give way to the conflict between public and private life.

*International Commentary*

# Reflections in Jerusalem

## *Religion under Stress—By Elie Kedourie*

IN THE LAST century or so Scriptural religions—and perhaps all traditional religions—have had to face the challenges and dangers of "secularisation." The onslaught has come from many directions. A scientific world-view has gained ground which on the face of it is incompatible with the Bible or the Koran; a new ideal of moral autonomy for the individual, irreconcilable with the authority of divine prescriptions, has become increasingly attractive; and the pervasive influence of Marxism has diminished all religion into a mere illusion, an "opium", used to lull the pain of alienation which men must suffer in a class-ridden society.

Religious responses have varied a good deal. Some of them have been uncompromising in rejecting modernity root-and-branch. But most have been anxious to appear broad-minded and up to date. In his recent Reith Lectures, Dr Edward Norman, for example, has forcefully argued that Christianity has absolutely no business with politics, and is not a religion of social service. But as other writings of his have established, commitment to the ideology of a liberal intelligentsia has been rife for decades now in the Church of England. Such a commitment, whether it stems from conviction or from the prudent pursuit of a defensive strategy of accommodation with what is taken to be "the spirit of the age", was manifest in reactions to the Falklands war. There was reluctance to acknowledge that a victory was a proper occasion for thanksgiving by the national Church; an eagerness, almost, to treat both sides with a distant impartiality; and even a fastidious distaste for the profession of arms. The same commitment is also patent in the activities of the World Council of Churches, as it is in the outlook of large numbers of Roman Catholic clergy. The Mexican priest "on the run" in Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*—a poor and scared creature, with his craving for alcohol, and terror of the authorities hunting him down, who yet at the peril of his life is driven to go from place to place secretly saying the Mass and administering the sacraments, because God must be brought to the faithful and only a priest can do so—is a figure from another world. Today he would be schooled in "Liberation Theology", able and ready to discourse fluently to television journalists on

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the Third World, Neo-colonialism, Multinationals, and the charms of urban guerrilla warfare.

SECULAR IDEAS and attitudes have also affected Islam deeply, albeit in different ways. Secular notions came to the Muslim world charged with all the prestige which a powerful and prosperous Europe possessed. Their attraction derived from the belief that modernity (of which secular notions are a part) would enable the Muslim world, which had come to be dominated by the European Great Powers, to defend itself and attain the same degree of prosperity and power. This was particularly important for Islam, since from the earliest times it had come to consider worldly success a proof and validation of its truth. But by the same token, secularisation was bound to lead to strain and tension in the life of Muslim societies. For traditional Islam had been associated with the idea that it was a religious duty for the subject to obey the ruler, whether bad or mad. The principle of individual autonomous judgment associated with the secular outlook made this unacceptable. Again, non-Muslims had their own, subordinate and inferior, station in a Muslim society; and this too was incompatible with secularity. Also, a secular outlook includes the notion of a society of states whose sole formal characteristic is the equal possession of sovereignty, and whose intercourse is, in some fashion, regulated by international law. An international order of this kind is at variance with a doctrine which saw the world as divided between the abode of Islam and the abode of war.

THE STRAINS might have been eased and the tensions alleviated if secularisation had borne the fruit which its advocates expected. But secularisation has not served to make the Muslim world visibly more powerful or more prosperous. And from the very first it gave rise to great opposition on the score that it was a betrayal of Islam, and a sure way of delivering it into the hands of its traditional enemies. Even when the prestige of Western civilisation was at its highest, and hence also the power and influence of the secularisers, this opposition was never completely silenced. With Khomeini in Iran and the Muslim Brethren in Syria and Egypt—with Pakistan officially enforcing the Islamisation of the judiciary, the economy and other public activities—with Malaysia and Indonesia harbouring powerful Islamic movements—what has been called "fundamentalism" is in full and seemingly irresistible flood.

But irresistible as it seems, fundamentalism may have a secret canker at its heart. For it is intimately affected by the secularisation it so sincerely rejects. The ideals of equality and social justice which it proclaims are really inspired by the popularity of Western ideologies which have disseminated these ideas all over the world. In this respect, the fundamentalist divines and those fashionable clerics of the Western world who equate Christianity with "social justice" may be brothers under the skin. In another respect, fundamentalism is caught in a dilemma. Muslim countries can no longer do without motor cars or telephones or all the other products of Western science. The argument now is that these things can simply be "imported" as they are required, that they need not make it impossible to found purely Islamic commonwealths, and lead a life similar to that of "the first Muslims." There is a desperately theoretical air about such arguments, since it was precisely the importation of Western techniques and Western manufacturers which in the first place led to secularisation.

Even more serious, fundamentalism will have to stand or fall by its ability to make Islam secure and powerful—which the secularisers failed to do. Can *power* and *security* today be attained without the weapons which the Muslim world does not develop or make—a state of affairs which the fundamentalists are least likely to remedy?

JUDAISM has also been profoundly touched by secularisation, and the strains this has set up are as serious as they are unresolved. Secularisation has offered Jews two alternative self-views, both of which are at variance with the traditional self-view; but neither of which is, in the end, satisfactory in providing a transparent and unproblematic account of the place of the Jews in the modern world, and in making them feel fully at home in it.

In the traditional self-view, the Jewish situation is simple. The people of Israel are bound by a Covenant with God. They are collectively responsible for abiding by the terms of the Covenant; but this collective responsibility in no way diminishes the responsibility of each single Jew to see that the Covenant is kept. To break the Covenant is to disobey God; and this sin brings punishment to the transgressor himself and to the whole people. Punishment for transgression culminated in Exile and Dispersion for the people. God is just, but He is also merciful, and in the course of time He will take pity and pardon. The exile and dispersion will end and the Messiah son of David will sit on his throne in Jerusalem.

This traditional self-view is unproblematic. Divine anger and divine mercy are the two poles which govern the course of Jewish history, all its vicissitudes, horrors and catastrophes included.

Another characteristic of this traditional self-view seems to have been established early on in Jewish history. In this history, almost from the beginning there was a dichotomy between prophethood and kingship, between, so to speak,

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spiritual and political authority, with kingship considered decidedly inferior to prophethood. From the very first, therefore, there was a depreciation of the political, and a profound scepticism about its efficacy. Of the many differences between Athens and Rome on the one hand, and Jerusalem on the other, this is probably the most striking and most far-reaching. Earthly power and its pride were nothing—and powerlessness, which marks so much of Jewish history, and which modern man so much resents, was not a particular concern to the traditional self-view.

THIS TRADITIONAL SELF-VIEW came in modern times to be considerably eroded by a rival one, which saw the Jews not as the object of divine election—which involved duties rather than privileges—and not as agents in a providential history the unfolding of which is set out in Scripture. Rather, the Jews are seen here as simply one group among the many which together constitute humanity. Like all of them they have progressed from Superstition to Enlightenment, and are now set to enjoy equally with their fellow-men all the rights and duties of citizenship, in a world where the inevitable spread of universal education will eradicate ignorance and its two products, fanaticism and despotism. Jews now take their place in the general society; they are bidden to be men abroad, but Jews only at home.

It is no doubt possible to see the course of Jewish history in these terms. In those Jewries where the European Enlightenment found lodgment, this self-view became popular, indeed dominant. But Nazism, to which a people hitherto considered to be in the van of civilisation gave overwhelming support—and the Holocaust which ensued—threw grave doubt on the notion of historical progress which the Enlightenment had invented, and on the particular Jewish self-view derived from it. For if this self-view is accepted, then there is no possible accounting for the disasters which befell the Jews after 1933. If, in large parts of Europe, Jewish citizens suddenly found themselves outlawed, their property and lives wholly subject to the arbitrariness of their own governments and at the mercy of their fellow citizens then surely there was something quite wrong with this modern self-view. By contrast, the traditional one, so long derided as reactionary obscurantism, now reveals unexpected strengths. What Enlightened Judaism cannot explain, traditional Judaism has the spiritual resources to cope with. But, for good reasons, neither the one nor the other self-view can secure complete dominance in the Jewish world—and it is not simply that some give allegiance to the one, and some to the other. It is rather also that often, within one and the same breast, the two self-views dwell in strenuous contention or uneasy coexistence.

THERE IS YET ANOTHER, rival, Jewish self-view which has appeared in modern times. It is now just as influential as the other two. This is Zionism. Like the Enlightened self-view, it is the outcome of the Jewish encounter with modern Western thought. Nationalism is one of the most powerful and influential ideologies invented in the modern West. It holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, each one of which has its own specific and peculiar character. If national values are to survive, nations have to live on their own territory and enjoy self-government. Zionism is the adaptation of this doctrine to the Jewish condition. Only in a country of their own, Zionists hold, can the Jews survive and preserve their identity, their lives and their culture. If Judaism is deprived of a territorial base it becomes ghostly and insubstantial, and fails to satisfy the spirit. On this analysis, homelessness is the central Jewish predicament. The establishment of Israel is, in a sense, the fulfilment of the Zionist aim.

But how different the circumstances in which Israel was established and exists today from what the founders of Zionism had in mind! If homelessness is indeed the central Jewish predicament, Israel has proved no remedy. Far from Israel resolving the dilemmas of Jewish existence in the Diaspora, the Diaspora is today essential to the welfare, and perhaps to the survival, of Israel. The so-called "Canaanites" and others in Israel have, however, taken the line that there is and ought to be a fundamental distinction between Jews and Israelis. This is an untenable paradox since it is as Jews, and because they were Jews, that the original settlers came to Palestine and laid the foundations on which Israel was built. Even if this were practically possible, it would still be highly uncomfortable for their descendants to cut themselves off from their past, and rather bizarre to think of themselves as not being part of Jewry.

Far more prevalent today is the idea of the centrality of Israel in Jewish life and history. But this notion too is not without its difficulties. To put the state of Israel at the centre of Jewish history, or consider it as the terminus and fulfilment of Jewish history, would be to look upon two millennia of Jewish life in the Diaspora as a mere preface and preparation for the establishment of a Jewish state. But the fact is that Jews, scattered throughout the world, without benefit of political sovereignty, indeed frequently the victims of unfriendly and oppressive rulers, did succeed, in a most remarkable and original way, in creating and preserving a network of communal institutions; and these became the buttresses and carriers of their tradition and identity.

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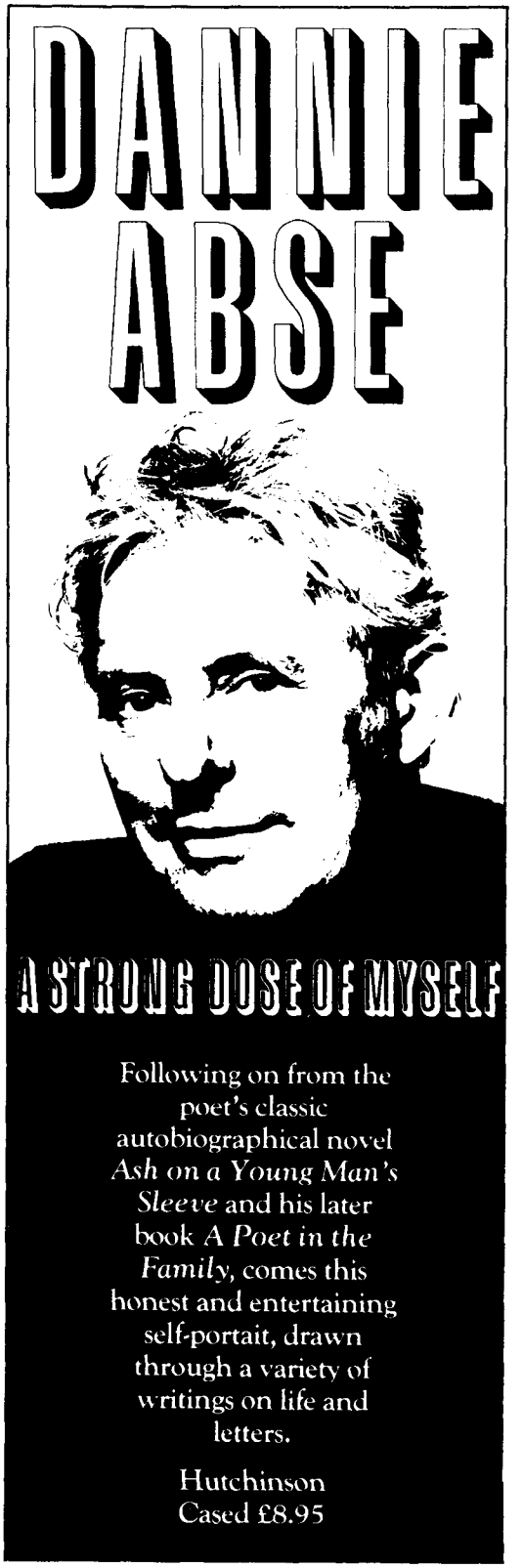
THE JEWISH SELF-VIEW which Zionism promotes has by no means superseded or cancelled the other two. Hence an additional cause for inner fragmentation and strain. Equally with Christianity and Islam, Judaism testifies, thus, to the ravages which modernity has wrought on traditional religions and on the traditional societies for whom they provided solace and coherence.

To a greater extent perhaps than in the other two religions, modernity has disrupted Jewish patterns of communal life and communication. Hence the existence of a Jewish state can serve to protect and promote institutions working for the survival and continuity of Judaism. But whether Israel—which has successfully absorbed and adapted Western values and norms, but which has not so far proved religiously innovative—can succeed in fashioning a Judaism intellectually able to challenge modernity (better say, than US Jewry, so much more numerous and incomparably wealthier) remains a moot point. Also, the character of Israeli politics since 1948 means that religious parties have taken shape which are deeply involved in the bargaining or haggling which government-by-coalition entails. *Mystique* descends to *politique*, and this is not compatible with the aloof detachment from political quarrels which is necessary for authority in religion.

IN ITS AIMS and assumptions, Zionism may seem to hold an eccentric views of the course of Jewish history, and be hard put to it to account for the present state of affairs. But does Israel as it is now depend on the truth, or cogency, of the doctrine which presided over its coming to be? However it came about, here is a society which is now a going concern, in all its variety and complexity, its tensions and complications. It does not need to justify its existence by appealing to some ideology. Nor can the ideology make Israel immune from the chances and changes to which all states are necessarily subject, or save its rulers from mistakes and blunders. And, given the differing self-views which coexist in the Jewish world, it is not easy, or indeed even practicable, to have recourse to one single ideology in order to explain and justify the nation-state.

But it is really the very predicament in which Israel has found herself since 1948 which leaves contending self-views and ideological warfare behind.

Since its foundation Israel has been in a state of war with its neighbours. This international conflict has been the direct consequence of a strategic decision taken by the leaders of the Palestine Arabs long before 1948. In their uncompromising opposition to Zionism these leaders decided to call in the Arab and Muslim worlds to the support of their cause. To judge by its results, the strategy has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not so far been notably successful in protecting the interests of the Palestine Arabs. What it has done is to widen immeasurably, and to increase enormously, the gravity of what started out by being a local and limited quarrel. This ceased to be simply a matter of a Jewish "national home" or a "Jewish state." The whole Arab, the whole Muslim, world has now become involved in this contention, and consequently the whole of Jewry as well. Israelis have found themselves inexorably treading the treadmill of power and violence, enmeshed in the dialectic of political conflict and armed struggle which few Zionists can have envisaged when the movement began. And the uncompromising stance, the "maximalist" language which has been throughout a hall-mark of the conflict, has conjured up forebodings of catastrophe and nightmares of expulsion and extermination, the reverberations of which, as is only natural, affect most intimately the Jews of Israel. An inkling of what these can be may be gathered from post-1948 Israeli poetry and fiction, some of which has explored quite subtly such mental and spiritual states, and how they can coexist with military efficiency, courage, and prowess on the battlefield.

But the effects of such forebodings and nightmares are not confined to Israeli Jews. They spread to, and deeply affect the Jewish world, and their power is enhanced by the memory of past disasters—which stretch back at least to the Roman Empire's sack of Jerusalem. Just as the fortunes of Judaea touched in the end the whole of Jewry, in which the Diaspora (then as now) was by far the largest component, so willy-nilly the fortunes of Israel, good or bad, will do so similarly, and in ways now unexpected and not to be foreseen.

# The Protests in Pushkin Square

## *By Bohdan Nahaylo*

MOSCOW'S CELEBRATED Pushkin Square has been the site of many unofficial gatherings and protests. The most famous, the demonstration on 5 December 1965 against the arrest of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, heralded the birth of the Soviet Human Rights movement. Every year since then Soviet dissenters have gathered there silently on 10 December to commemorate this and to observe the anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Two extraordinary incidents which took place in the square last year rank among the most bizarre and embarrassing demonstrations ever witnessed in the Soviet Union. The details have slowly been emerging.

On 20 April 1982, more than a dozen young Russian neo-Nazis, wearing black shirts and swastika armbands, congregated in Pushkin Square in an attempt to mark Hitler's birthday. Scuffles broke out as shocked bystanders tried to break up the unauthorised meeting, and several people are reported to have been injured. At the nearby *Rossiya* Cinema, fascist leaflets were scattered. Within a few minutes the police dispersed the demonstrators, reportedly detaining several of them.

The astonishing thing is that this was not an isolated episode. On several other recent occasions groups of Soviet youths have flaunted their fascist sympathies in open defiance of the authorities and with total disregard for the acute sensitivities of a population subjected to constant official reminders about the 20 million Soviet victims in the war against Nazi Germany.

Since the first reported public appearance of self-styled Soviet fascists in the Estonian city of Tallinn in September 1980, pro-Nazi demonstrations are reported to have taken place in Sverdlovsk, Yuzhno-Uralsk, Leningrad, and other towns. In November 1981, for instance, around 100 high school students are said to have taken to the streets with the slogan "*Fascism will save Russia!*" And last June, neo-fascist hooligans are believed to have been responsible for vandalising statues in Leningrad's Summer Gardens.

Western experts have long known about the existence of clandestine fascist groups in various parts of the Soviet Union. (In many cases they have consisted of the offspring of government and party functionaries.) In the 1960s a large fascist organisation comprising high school students was formed in Leningrad. In 1968 Anton Fetisov and a group of his followers were arrested in Moscow for advocating extreme Russian chauvinist and totalitarian views. According to dissident sources, his brand of violently anti-Semitic "ultra-Stalin-

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ism" attracted considerable support before the authorities declared him insane and placed him in a mental hospital. At around the same time a group calling itself the "Soviet Fascist Party" was rounded up after distributing leaflets outside the Kremlin.

The demonstration in Pushkin Square highlighted the existence of what seems to be no more than a "lunatic fringe" that hardly poses any serious threat to the régime. Nevertheless, it is somewhat baffling that having so ruthlessly suppressed in recent years the various moderate movements for civil, national, and religious rights, the Soviet authorities do not appear to have launched a corresponding drive against fascist sympathisers. There have been no show trials to serve as a warning, nor, for that matter, even any official admission that such misguided zealots have been a problem. Significantly, when three students at the Moscow Polygraphic Institute who had helped disrupt the neo-Nazi gathering in Pushkin Square wished to discuss the incident at a political information meeting, they were reportedly told in no uncertain terms by the *KGB* to mind their own business.

THE SECOND PROTEST also had a para-military character. According to a recent issue of the reliable Human Rights bulletin *USSR News Brief*, on 1 August 1982, 30 to 50 men wearing camouflage jackets and blue berets marched in a column from the Pushkin monument to the *Rossiya* cinema and back. They then formed a circle, and one of them sang. Later they marched away, shouting "Down with the fascists! Long live the military dictatorship!" Their number and readiness to resist deterred the police from intervening. The report states that they were discharged paratroopers, veterans of the Soviet military campaign in Afghanistan.

So far it is not known what this demonstration signified. Was it some sort of anti-war protest as some suggest? Or was it perhaps aimed at the West? Which "fascists" were the protestors referring to, and what did they mean by "the military dictatorship"? Whatever the case, their protest was in sharp contrast to the Human Rights campaigners who have become so much a part of Pushkin Square with their annual silent vigil.

# Film, Facts, & History

## *Gandhi: A Political Saint?*—By ALGERNON RUMBOLD

THE BRITISH administration of India ended for many reasons. The British people were disenchanted with imperial rule. The politically conscious sections of the Indian peoples expanded rapidly during the first half of this century, as did India's social and economic framework. This made the governance of India much more complex and called for more ingenuity and sensitivity than the British possessed. There were the deadening effects on both Britain and India of the great Depression and two World Wars. Finally, there was the impossibility in 1946-47 of Britain maintaining her military burden in India consistently with her other defence obligations. It was the size and turbulence of India, rather than Gandhi's gimmicks, that were crucial.

When the British Cabinet announced in 1917 that "responsible government" was India's goal, without realising fully what that phrase meant, they sentenced the administration to eventual death. Meanwhile, for an indeterminate period, it remained responsible for the peace, defence, and prosperity of India, while many who might otherwise have supported it in this task instead looked for Britain's potential heirs, and struggled among themselves and with the Raj for bigger shares in the spoil. And this flight from the British bandwagon became a rout when in 1946 Lord Wavell began to talk of "evacuation" with a time limit.

The fundamental problem was that a democratically ruled, united India was bound to be Hindu-dominated, and this the Muslims would not accept. The unity of the sub-continent was incompatible with the application to it of the Westminster parliamentary system (for which both Indian and British politicians had great affection). But such was the legitimate pride of the British in their achievement of the unity of India that until the

SIR ALGERNON RUMBOLD, KCMG, *served in the India Office from 1929 to 1947, and thereafter in the Commonwealth Relations Office from which he retired in 1966 as Deputy Under-Secretary of State. He is the author of "Watershed in India, 1914-1922", published in 1979 by Athlone Press, and an honorary fellow of the governing body of the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.*

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penultimate hour they shut their minds to the alternative of partition, while Gandhi never accepted it. Meanwhile, every step towards India's freedom increased communal tension and made administration more difficult.

The price paid for that freedom has been high. The sub-continent has seen massacres beyond precedent and three wars. Resources have gone massively into arms. Partition has opened a path for an eventual advance of Soviet influence to the Indian Ocean, because a divided sub-continent has never successfully resisted invaders. Abdication in India set the scene for the abdication of all powers (except Russia) in almost all dependent territories. With so many weak and quarrelsome States resulting, the peace of the world has become less secure, and the responsibilities for it cast on the United States have become greater. It will be for historians in the next century to strike the balance.

For three decades, while these events unfolded, Mohandas Gandhi was the eccentric leader of the Indian nationalist movement. His influence rested on his politico-religious appeal to lower middle-class people, artisans, and many cultivators whom other nationalist politicians could not reach. His capacity for organisation and for hard work contributed as much to this as did his austere life and his alleged sainthood. The Congress Party had previously been just an annual gathering of high-caste Hindus who wanted, not to upset the Raj, but to use their Western education to influence the government in their own narrow interests. Gandhi instead made a fundamental challenge to Western materialism and sought to strengthen ancient Hindu traditions. He was quite uninterested in constitutions, and preached that if Indians genuinely forswore violence, ended untouchability, gained communal amity, and all spun *khaddar* cloth (none of which objectives have been achieved), they would have thereby attained "*purna swaraj*."

He converted the Congress Party into a permanent and agitational body. He had learned in South Africa how to cooperate with Muslims and traders, although his emphasis on Hindu symbolism clashed with Islam. Nor did his Vaishnavite ideas about non-violence and passivity fit in well with the more vigorous attributes of Shiva and Kali (favoured by Bengali Hindus and Maratha Brahmins, who liked to exploit their parliamentary talents and were ambivalent about what their nephews did in murder clubs) or with the practice of rowdy Muslim elements in the towns. But Gandhi checked the risk, which was real in the days of Tilak up to 1916, of political assassination becoming a notable feature of Indian nationalism.

THE NATIONALISTS were never a happy band of brothers. Indeed their actions were often dictated by a desire to conceal their differences, and it was to Gandhi that they looked to devise expedients to mend the cracks. It was this, and the hold he had over their local supporters, that impelled them generally to do what he wanted. His influence with them much depended on the patience and courtesy which Viceroys extended to his quirks. When, like Lord Willingdon and Lord Linlithgow, they paid no attention to him, his stock slumped. When Lord Irwin negotiated with him in March 1931, he reached the apogee of his orbit.

Passive resistance and non-violence were admirable in theory, but the encouragement of disobedience to some laws affects respect for all laws and customs. In India it undermines society and leads to violent incidents. This is what Gandhi found when his *satyagraha* against the Rowlatt Act in 1919 led to murderous riots in the Punjab and elsewhere, and when his non-cooperation movement in 1920-22 occasioned a sanguinary uprising of Muslim Moplahs in Malabar against their Hindu landlords. It occurred again in Peshawar at the time of his salt propaganda in March-May 1930, during the civil disobedience campaign of 1932, and during the "*Quit India*" call by the Congress Party in 1942. His deal with Lord Irwin in March 1931 was followed a few days later by exultant Hindus, who thought it meant that Hindu rule had come, murdering 1,000 Muslims in Cawnpore, which was an awful warning of what was to follow.

Politicians who claim a direct line to God can be very dangerous.

SIR RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH'S spectacular film on Gandhi touches only peripherally on these issues. A film which dealt with them might not have got from the Indian authorities the facilities it required. Indeed their complexities would defy comprehension in any film, and perhaps films are an unsuitable medium for the portrayal of history.

The trouble is that, in order to highlight Gandhi's merits as a leader, his remarkable personal charm, and his philosophy of non-violence, other Indians are emptied of character and the agents of the Raj are shown as usually rather brutal and more muddled in their policies than they were. The film will need to attract vast audiences throughout the world if it is to cover its great cost. The British cinema-going public are probably conditioned by television not to mind its anti-British slant. In the United States the populace still think of the British Empire in terms of 1776 and all that, and would be astonished at a balanced picture. No doubt there will be sales in Moscow.

For example, while Dyer's outrage at Amritsar on 13 April 1919 was intolerable, it is right to remember that he faced with very few troops a crowd which has been estimated variously at figures between 6,000 and 20,000, congregated in

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a confined space. Three days before, a similar mob had sacked buildings and murdered Europeans, and it looked as if a repeat performance was being warmed up. It was so noisy that a warning by Dyer would have been inaudible. The 50 Gurkhas he deployed could have been overwhelmed by the crowd. But Attenborough's Jallianwala Bagh looks the size of Berkeley Square. He makes his Gurkhas very prominent, while the crowd he recruited is gathered at the distant end of the enclosure and resembles 100-200 casual listeners to Marble Arch oratory on a Sabbath afternoon.

Dyer is shown subsequently being asked trick questions by barristers on the Hunter Committee of Enquiry, without the benefit of legal aid. That is correct, although the film is wrong in recording exchanges which imply that women and children were present at the monstrous deed.

Again, the 1,500–2,000 villagers who burned alive 21 Indian policemen in their station at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces on 4 February 1922 (an incident which shocked India and Britain at the time) are given in the film some justification for their atrocity by previous violence of an improbable kind attributed to the policemen; and the murderers scarcely outnumber their victims. Elderly *khaddar*-clad Gujeratis are shown seeking non-violently to enter a salt factory. Certainly there were attempts to do this in about May 1930, and they led to many arrests. Indeed the objective of the demonstrators was, not to create a fracas, but to go to jail and thus qualify for Congress Party office. In the film they advance slowly in column of fours towards a line of police, rather as graduates approach the Vice-Chancellor at an Oxford Encaenia. Each file goes up separately to the police and, instead of a Latin benediction, gets quietly, ceremonially, and cold-bloodedly clubbed to the ground. Then the bodies are removed by grieving friends from under the feet of the policemen to make room for the next file; and so on. This would be laughable if it were not a libel.

When Viceroys are shown sitting with their advisers, most of those present are dressed up in military uniform, presumably in order to suggest the presence of the jackboot. In fact the Viceroy's Executive Council contained only one soldier. Its Indian members never appear in the film. Attenborough's whole story tails off after Gandhi was put by Lord Willingdon in January 1932 under restraint as a state prisoner (not on a charge as the film implies), because his freedom would have endangered public order during the civil disobedience campaign then in progress.

We are not told of the rapid disintegration of that campaign, or of Gandhi's long drawn out controversy with his colleagues over whether it should be formally ended so that Congressmen could participate in elections for legislatures. The film is completely silent about World War II, in which India contributed massively to victory; but in which Gandhi and the Congress Party put their money on Japan. A reference to that might not have helped sales either in Britain or in the United States.

INDEED THE LAST fifteen years of the Mahatma's life, throughout which his influence was slipping, are represented only by his fast at Calcutta in 1946 against communal killing[1] and by his assassination at Delhi in 1948. At the end, when nemesis came in the Punjab in August 1947, we are shown briefly two columns of refugees going in different directions and engaging in some stone-throwing. It was horribly unlike that. There are no pictures of the organised armed gangs wiping out defenceless villages, or holding up trains and massacring the passengers; and no pictures of crowds of refugees driven into rivers to drown. At the time, I reckoned, on the basis of material then reaching the India Office, that the death toll might have reached 600,000; and subsequent estimates have generally been higher. Such is the cost of saints.

There are other minor inaccuracies. The non-cooperation movement of 1920-22 was supported mainly by Muslims, but a statement in the film that Jinnah approved of it is incorrect. No new governor of the North-West Frontier Province arrived at Bombay on the same ship as Gandhi in 1915; indeed the Province did not have a governor until seventeen years later; and no provincial governor, except that of Bombay, would have received military honours there. Too many American news reporters clutter the scene.

Ben Kingsley makes an excellent Mahatma: it is a remarkable piece of acting, and he has captured Gandhi's attractive smile. But my recollection of Gandhi during the Second Round Table Conference in 1931, where my seat in the conference room in St James's Palace was immediately behind him, is that inside his gentle exterior there was a vein of autocracy and vanity which does not appear in the film. Jinnah is too well-nourished and insufficiently sinister. Nehru is well cast. Miss Slade (Miraben) is too beautiful and Satdar Patel too boisterous for historical acceptance. Nothing could be more remote from the real appearance and manner of Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax), whose amanuensis I briefly was, than John Gielgud's representation.

The extravaganza will doubtless be enjoyed by millions of citizens throughout the world, looking for drama and good photography, but unconcerned with the "Truth" that Gandhi said he sought.

[1] See, in ENCOUNTER, the articles by Francis Watson, "Gandhi as a 'Hunger-Striker'?" (November 1981) and "The Age of Gandhi" (October 1968).

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*A Special Book Section*

# Politics & World Affairs

## Waiting for the Balance-Sheet

*France & the Socialists—By* DOUGLAS JOHNSON

SHORTLY BEFORE the first ballot of the French Presidential elections in 1981, a member of the Conseil Constitutionnel who was due to attend a seminar at University College, London, immediately after the final ballot on 10 May, cancelled his visit. He explained that it would not be fitting for one of *les neuf sages*, the nine guardians of the Constitution, to be outside France in the event of a new President succeeding to office.

This was interesting, obviously, because it was among the first palpable suggestions that Giscard d'Estaing would lose the election, at a time when the general assumption was still that he would be the winner. More particularly striking was the apprehension that the transfer of power to the leader of the opposition might present difficulties. It was true that these were the first normal elections by universal suffrage since 1965, as Pompidou had been elected in 1969 in order to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of de Gaulle, and Giscard d'Estaing had been elected in 1974 because Pompidou had died. The procedure for a transfer had never been established. But more than this, the belief persisted that the Constitution, which had supposedly been tailor-made for de Gaulle, was bound to be fragile when used by anyone else, and it was widely feared (and in some quarters hoped) that a Socialist President would experience certain very particular difficulties when he came to assume office. The premonitory statement by the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, General de Boissieu (de Gaulle's son-in-law), that he would resign his office were Mitterrand to be elected, seemed to be a harbinger of future dissent.

As everyone now knows, the transition from Giscard to Mitterrand was remarkably smooth. It was with a quiet aplomb that the new President assumed those powers and functions which he had earlier denounced. An uneventful general election gave the Socialists an absolute majority, which was all the more reassuring because many of their gains were made at the expense of the Communists, their allies. Although there was no obligation to invite the Communists to join the government headed by Pierre Mauroy, they were given four relatively minor posts which were accepted with enthusiasm by them and with indifference by French opinion. Although many directors in the ministries were replaced and although a large number of prefects and university rectors were changed, there was no great holocaust of civil servants, not even a *valse des fonctionnaires*. It seemed that administrative power was still in the hands of the products of the École Nationale d'Administration, even if the proportion of *énarques* surrounding the President and the Prime Minister has decreased.

For many, the ease with which *l'alternance* worked was significant. It was because *l'alternance* did not mean much. The change between one President and the other was apparent rather than real. As Casimir Périer put it in 1830, there had been no revolution. There had simply been a change in the person of the head of state.

Succeeding months seemed to confirm such scepticism. The Socialists lost some by-elections in January 1982 and did badly in the *élections cantonales* the following spring. They appeared to have lost their momentum, and the opposition had emerged from its disarray. By the summer of 1982 the Mauroy government, which contained voices which had already asked for a pause in the process of reform, began to emphasise the dangers of inflation and the need to preserve the value of the franc. The Socialists as a whole stopped talking about a quarter of a century of right-wing misrule and rather turned to asking the Gaullist-Giscardian opposition what they would do were they in power. The introduction of a wage and price freeze, even if it were called *une politique de rigueur* rather than *une politique d'austérité*, recalled nothing so much as the preceding government. Jacques Delors, the Finance Minister, was



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following the orthodox policies of Giscard's Prime Minister, Raymond Barre, and it was said that the régime was now one of "*Delors en barre.*"

After only a short period when the euphoric ideology of socialism had made humorists inappropriate, the *chansonniers* were back in business. The Fifth Republic was as it always had been. France was herself again.

THIS INTERPRETATION was essentially political. It reposed upon the conventional wisdom that elections are seldom won by a party or by a person; they are invariably lost by those who are in power at the time. In 1981, it can be argued, there was no widespread conversion to Socialism. There was a general feeling of being bored by Giscard and fed up with his government. It is true that ever since Jacques Chirac resigned as Prime Minister in 1976, accusing Giscard of a lack of decisiveness in his policies, the government had lost its liberal and reforming ambitions as well as its freedom of action. It became increasingly negative in its attitudes, and the so-called *auto-satisfaction* which Giscard d'Estaing exuded in his many public appearances made the prospect of another seven years of his government increasingly irritating. Allegations of certain scandals were all the more persistent because the scandals in question were minor and did not seem to merit any serious investigation. Most serious of all, the government seemed unable to do anything about mounting unemployment, and a trade-union leader described the unemployment figures as the tin cans which were attached to Giscard d'Estaing's coat-tails.

The result was that in the second ballot of May 1981 there were many votes which Giscard d'Estaing might have expected to have come to him, votes which *had* to come to him were he to win. But they slipped away. Between the two ballots Chirac expressed only tepid support for Giscard, and only 73% of his votes went to the outgoing President, the remainder either going to Mitterrand or simply disappearing in a mystery of abstentions and spoilt ballot-papers. In the light of these events it could be claimed that Mitterrand had not won the election, but that Giscard had lost it, and therefore it would be wrong to regard his arrival in power as being of any particular significance in the history of the Fifth Republic or in the evolution of French society.

BUT TO SAY THIS would be to ignore the recent history of the French Socialist Party. The electoral victories of 1981 have to be seen as the climax of a long period of successful activity. From 1971, when Mitterrand became its First

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Secretary, and from 1972, when Socialists and Communists formed their first alliance, with the Common Programme, the Left had been expectant of victory in France.

Neill Nugent and David Lowe, the historians of this progress,[1] note that between 1971 and 1977-78 the membership of the Socialist Party more than doubled. It had thrown off the reputation, with which Guy Mollet had endowed it, of being a pale, ineffective opposition party which was so fearful of the realities that it tended to serve the interests of General de Gaulle. (Not long before the elections of 1965, de Gaulle is supposed to have said that he had a good Secretary-General for the Elysée. "You mean Étienne Burin des Roziers?", he was asked. "No, I mean Guy Mollet", was the answer.)

During the 1970s many important elements of left-wing thinking came together in the Socialist Party. There was the Marxist, or "*marxisant*", group, the Centre d'Études de Recherches et d'Éducation Socialistes (*CERES*) led by Jean-Pierre Chevènement and other graduates of the École Nationale d'Administration. Certain members of the Parti Socialistes Unifié (*PSU*), notably Michel Rocard, and of the trade union, the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (*CFDT*), joined the Socialists, as did a number of individuals who had been fairly prominent in the existing majority, such as Edgar Pisani (formerly de Gaulle's Minister for Agriculture) and Jacques Delors (formerly adviser to Chaban-Delmas when he had been Prime Minister).

The influx of new members, the rejuvenation of local organisations, and the establishment of Party programmes and propaganda meant that the Socialists began to win votes in all types of elections. Their influence spread into areas where they had been weak, not only over recent times, but going back beyond the days of the Fifth Republic—areas in western France, for example, which had traditionally voted for Catholic and Right-wing parties. By 1973, in the elections of that year, the Socialists were only one point behind the Communists in voting strength, and well on their way to becoming the most important party of the Left, which was Mitterrand's open and stated ambition. In the elections of 1978 (which were disappointing because they had been preceded by the collapse of the *Union de la Gauche*, Communists, Socialists and left-wing Radicals) it maintained its position as the largest party of the Left, and indeed won more votes than any other party in metropolitan France.

Thus the eventual landslide in favour of the Socialists has to be seen as the result of a long and patient progress, whatever temporary or accidental elements there were which entered into it. Mitterrand's statement, in an interview to *Le Monde* (2 July 1981) that what had happened was neither an individual adventure nor the coming to power of any old party ("*la prise du pouvoir par n'importe quel parti*") has to be seen against this background.

THERE WERE TWO REASONS why the Socialists and the Communists should come together. The one, and the more compelling, was the nature of the institutions. Given the election of the President, the keystone of the Constitution, by universal suffrage, it was impossible for the opposition to envisage abstaining from the political process. Therefore, however much they disapproved of the constitution of the Fifth Republic, they were obliged to cooperate in its working. And given the double-ballot system, whether for Presidential, legislative, or municipal elections, it was equally clear that if the two major parties of the Left did not combine their strengths on the final ballot, then they were likely to be perpetually defeated, condemned to stay in opposition. This "electoralist obsession", as Dorothy Pickles has called it,[2] was inevitable, and it was bound to lead to some sort of general agreement, however imprecise, on policy.

The second reason why Socialists and Communists could come together was that such an agreement became easier in itself. Most commentators have stressed the unchanging nature of the French Communist Party, regarding it still as Stalinist in its domestic organisation and in its attitudes to world affairs. But when Georges Marchais, before the Central Committee in September 1978, stated that the Communists recognised that the revolution could only come about as a result of a series of reforms which would lead democracy towards socialism, then doctrinally the way was open for the Communists to cooperate with the Socialists. However much both the grassroots and the *direction* resented and feared having to act as *un marchepied*, a mere stepping-stone in the Socialist accession of power, and however much they insisted on maintaining their own identity even if it meant attacking the Socialist leadership at crucial moments in their relationship, the evolution of the *PCF* was towards a coalition of the Left-wing parties. Like the coalition of the central parties during the Fourth Republic, they were condemned to stay together.

Thus it could be argued that the positive strength of the Left was quite as important in determining the results of 1981 as were the mistakes and negations of the incumbent Giscardians. This meant too that within the French population

[1] *The Left in France*. By NEILL NUGENT and DAVID LOWE. Macmillan Press, £15.00.

[2] *Problems of Contemporary Politics*. By DOROTHY PICKLES. Methuen, £8.95, paper £3.95.

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there was a desire for change which responded to the very precise list of propositions which Mitterrand submitted to the electorate and which, since being elected, he has insisted should form the guidelines of all his policy.

THE RESULT WAS a remarkable flurry of legislation in the first twelve months of the new "régime" (and it was called a new régime rather than a new government). There were sound tactical reasons for this, in so far as the Socialists were anxious to maintain the momentum which their election successes had given them, and to contrast their activity as reformers to the more lethargic Giscardians. It was also necessary for an expectant and apprehensive financial sector of the country to know as soon as possible what the government's plans were, otherwise all economic activity would have been in danger of stagnation. Therefore measures were immediately announced and rapidly enacted.

Among the most important were the nationalisations and the measures for decentralisation. The first involved certain sectors of the economy (steel, arms, and credit), as well as five large financial groups and three groups which had particular links abroad. It extended the role of the state considerably, in spite of the denial that it in any way resembled "*des nationalisations rampantes.*" The second transferred powers from the prefects (now called *Commissaires de la République*) to the presidents of regional councils, and is arranging to transfer greater resources and responsibilities for planning to the regional councils which will be elected by universal suffrage. Most observers are agreed that the effects of these reforms, once carried out, could be far-reaching.

Other reforms were also important. Most unpopular was the abolition of the death penalty, which has been accompanied by changes in the administration of justice and in the penal system. Of most immediate importance was the attempt to reduce unemployment, using the classical methods of increasing the number of jobs available (an exercise with only limited possibilities, although the Communist ministers in charge of transport and the civil service have made significant claims to have created employment) and of sharing out the existing job market. This is to be done by making people work less. Thus there is a fifth week's holiday with pay, a reduction of the 40-hour week to 39, with the intention of eventually having a 35-hour week, and early retirement. More far-reaching was the attempt to affect labour relations by making collective bargaining between employers and employees more effective and

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encouraging forms of *autogestion* by an emphasis on worker rights.

The institution of a wealth tax (which is hardly as important as it seems since many of the normal forms of wealth, such as paintings and possessions which have an historical interest are excepted, and the tax is based upon voluntary declarations) and the granting of financial aid to women who have abortions (a measure which has displeased feminist organisations because it is said to be both parsimonious and over-complex in its administration) were also reforms which received a good deal of publicity. The increase in minimum wages was significant, being of the order of 11.6% over a period of 18 months, and other measures were taken in favour of the elderly and of children's allowances.

MORE RECENTLY the government has gone on the defensive. It has declared, and most of the ministers seem to be in agreement, that it now has no intention of proceeding with reforms which will involve it in any substantial expenditure. Nevertheless the promise of a legislative programme which will be far-reaching remains. On more than one occasion all work has stopped in state primary and secondary schools in order that teachers, pupils and parents should join together in discussing the future organisation of education, and the Minister of Education has put forward a plan for the unification of both state and private education which has, in some people's view, revived the old Church-State quarrel over schools. A new statute for universities is in the offing, with particular provisions for the role of the *grandes écoles*. The system of children's allowances, like the organisation of Social Security, is under scrutiny, and legislation can be expected from the large empire of technology, research, and industry that is controlled by Jean-Pierre Chevènement.

If Socialist ministers reject the suggestion that they have come to a stop in their reforming aspirations, they must expect further and considerable controversy, since each one of the measures adumbrated is bound to meet determined opposition. This is bound to be all the sharper since municipal elections are due to be held on 6 and 13 March 1983.

IT IS CLEAR that such legislative achievements can only have been followed through as the result of unusual political circumstances. By these one does not simply mean, according to Maurice Duverger,[3] the banal fact that somebody has been elected as President of the Republic, with all the remarkable latitude of action that is available to him under the present Constitution. It means three essential things: the election of the President; the presence in the National Assembly of a coherent majority; and the existence of good relations between that majority in the Assembly and the President in the Elysée. Duverger sees these conditions being fulfilled at present (although they have not always been present since 1965, or if present, to a much lesser degree), but he goes against much constitutional comment by seeming to give most importance to the existence of an organised political party which can dominate the National Assembly. It is not only a sense of paradox that enables him to demonstrate that General de Gaulle elevated the Presidency to its present heights because he wished to destroy the *régime des partis*, and that Mitterrand only succeeded in creating a powerful Socialist Party by utilising the institutions established by that Constitution to which he had declared total opposition.

Duverger's thesis is debatable, but it is borne out when one considers those occasions when the effective majority was missing from the Assembly, as was the case with de Gaulle from 1967 to 1968, or with Giscard d'Estaing after the resignation of Chirac. The case of the present Socialist majority certainly merits examination. It was said, in 1981, that the overwhelming Socialist majority had not put an end to the pluralism which Giscard d'Estaing had believed to be the essence of liberalism. On the contrary, people argued, pluralism was now within the Socialists, and all the various tendencies which had struggled for supremacy, and which had been led by Mitterrand, Mauroy, Rocard, Chevènement and others, would continue to fight each other from the bastions of their ministerial positions.

In the early days of the régime foreign ambassadors reported that they were unable to locate the real centres of power, and it was assumed that the presence of Communist ministers and a radical would complicate the various alliances which would be formed and re-formed. In addition, with a large majority, essentially made up of young and inexperienced deputies, many of whom are school-teacher enthusiasts for socialism, lacking the experience and the realism that characterises the notabilities who make up other political groupings, there is the danger of easy and undisciplined disagreement. This was all the more likely since many of the Socialists had always resented the authority that Mitterrand had exercised over the Party and they had singled out the "*phénomène du château*", as they called it, for particular resentment.

However, it must be said that the Party has held together very well, in spite of the transition from

[3] *La République des Citoyens*. By MAURICE DUVERGER. Ramsay (Paris), Fr. 77.

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success and acclaim to the disappointments of austerity and declining popularity. There have been open disagreements among ministers, frequently centred on the outspoken realism of Jacques Delors, or on the rivalry between the Minister of the Interior, Deferre, and the Minister of Justice, Badinter. There have been the bitter soliloquies of Rocard and the grandiose plans of Chevènement. There have been occasions when ministerial decisions have demonstrated confusion and uncertainty—over the plans to decentralise the administration of Paris, for example, or over the attempts to organise early retirement for all. It would have been understandable if such public demonstrations of muddle had led to ministers accusing each other of incompetence. But this has hardly happened.

There have been only two resignations. The one (in June 1982) by Madame Nicole Questiaux, who refused to spend her time making economies in Social Security; the other by Jean-Pierre Cot, last December, who found that his authority in Third World matters, particularly in Africa, was being undermined by the Elysée, notably by the President's son. (Concerning the latter it is the Communists rather than the Socialists who have asked about presidential power, and who have raised the question as to whether there is once again a *domaine réservé* for the Elysée.) There has been only one widespread revolt, which had to be dispelled by the government applying its power to pass regulations rather than laws, and which concerned the amnesty for the rebellious generals in the Algerian war.

IF WE ASK WHY this should be so, there are several answers. For one thing, there is the violence of the opposition. However much Socialists might feel betrayed as they hear their leaders putting forward their measures of austerity and pleading with the independent leaders of industry to assist them in their efforts to increase productivity, they cannot but be affected by the anti-Socialist vituperation that characterises not only the press and the more picaresque characters of the opposition (such as Poniatowski), but which also permeates ordinary political life. On one occasion for example, it was the leader of the Gaullist parliamentary group who referred scathingly to a Socialist Minister, there present, as a minister who was "supposedly French" (*dit Français*). Neither Socialists nor Communists would like to find themselves criticising their government alongside such critics.

It is also true that most of the criticism from within the Socialist Party has come from "Mitterrandists" rather than from the more dangerous poles of Rocardism or CERES. It is André Laignel,

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the treasurer of the Party, Christian Goux, the President of the Finance Commission, or Pierre Joxe himself, the President of the parliamentary group, who have most exasperated the First Secretary of the Party, Lionel Jospin. Rocard and Chevènement have kept their supporters in line, because they do not wish to be blamed for any break in party unity. Mitterrandist criticism of Mauroy, or of other ministers, cannot go too far, because it is bound to affect Mitterrand himself, eventually. Doubtless there will be strains over the municipal elections and over the Party Congress which is to be held in September 1983, but the forces of disagreement have held the Party together rather than disrupted it so far. As David Hanley puts it, "contradiction is the stuff of which the *PS* is made", and especially when seen at a local level, such contradictions often lead to compromise, adaptation and the overall strengthening of the party structure.[4]

THE PERSONALITY OF François Mitterrand is also crucial. Dorothy Pickles has said "no French political personality is more elusive" and Neill Nugent has called him "highly pragmatic." The author of the one full-length biography of him to have appeared in English reminds us that the adjective most frequently used about him by France's most experienced political writers is "enigmatic."[5] It is generally agreed that he is a complicated man and it has been suggested that he protects himself by his complexity. He is in some respects a solitary figure and he sees advantages in parading that solitude ("*Victoire, échec: on est toujours seul devant soi*"). His excursions into Marxism have not destroyed his belief in the spontaneity of events. The patience and determination which have enabled him to win a victory after 23 years of effort are not incompatible with an almost de Gaulle-like idea of delegating power to others and of avoiding the details of administration ("*l'intendance*").

His writings, such as the two notebooks which were first published in 1975 and 1978 and are now available in English,[6] reveal the sort of personality that he wants to present to the public: one who is deeply rooted in the French countryside, whose youth seems to have been spent contemplating nature; who has a deep instinct for literature, whether the classics (like Lamartine) or the latest Latin American novelist (like Gabriel Garcia Marquez); one who can see the general injustice caused by capital, but who is conscious of human rights and of the importance of individual cases. The English edition does not contain all the original references to Soviet Russia but it is interesting to see, among these well-controlled confessions, an entry such as this, for 4 July 1978.

> "Should I accuse Russia of making trouble? It treads warily. When you are big you have to. What should I say to America?"

But four things are clear. The first is that Mitterrand firmly believes that he is a Socialist and he is determined that he shall always be seen as such ("*socialiste sur la ligne du départ, je le serai sur la ligne d'arrivée*"); the second, that he is determined to change things in France so that his period in office will be remembered as one of the great stages in French history, after which nothing was the same; the third is that, de Gaulle-like, he feels that he is in touch with the profound realities of France and that he can persuade ordinary French people to support policies which are for the good of the whole of France; the last is that he is greatly interested in what happens in the world beyond France and he believes avidly that the French role in the world must be of great significance.

BUT, FOR CERTAIN OBSERVERS of France, to concentrate upon the French Socialist Party is to avoid the main problems of France in the 1980s—that is to say, the problems of the state and of society. John Ardagh, in the first edition of his book that appeared in 1968, explained that there was a new France, no longer a backward country economically, but modern and dynamic. From the Fourth Republic through de Gaulle and Pompidou, there had been a new industrial and technological revolution which had been largely carried out by the planners and technocrats. In the new edition, which appeared a year after the Socialist victories, he looks at the present situation and assesses the future.[7]

One of the main problems, as he sees it, is that the ambiguous attitude of the French towards the French State has been increased by this recent progress. The French traditionally, as de Gaulle put it, detested the state and were unable to live without it. The new technocratic state is authoritarian, relying upon centralisation and bureaucracy, and cooperating with the leaders of finance and business. To this élitism of education and wealth, other parts of France express their resistance in terms of extremism, fragmentation, regionalism,

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[4] See David Hanley's article on "The *CERES* in two departments" in *Contemporary French Political Parties*. Edited by DAVID S. BELL. Croom Helm, £13.95.

[5] *François Mitterrand: A Political Odyssey*. By DENIS MACSHANE. Quartet Books, £8.95.

[6] *The Wheat and the Chaff: The Personal Diaries of the President of France 1971-1978*. By FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND. Translated by RICHARD S. WOODWARD, HELEN R. LANE, and CONCILIA HAYTER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.50.

[7] *France in the 1980s*. By JOHN ARDAGH. Secker & Warburg, £15.00, paper £4.95.

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environmentalism, and other forms of opposition.

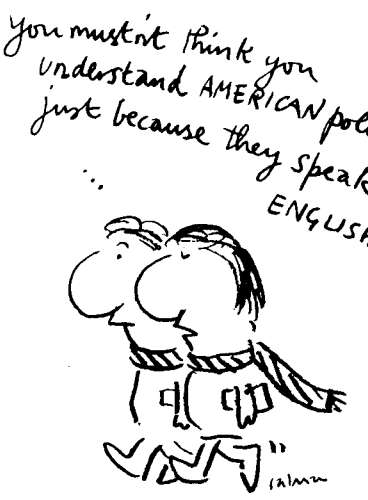
Ardagh still believes in this problem of authority. As Giscard's former Minister of Justice put it, France is locked in a vicious circle. On the one hand there is a population that is passive and undisciplined, and which justifies *dirigisme*; on the other hand, bureaucracy discourages initiatives, suffocates activity, and can easily effect the transition from being an instrument of pressure to becoming one of oppression.

Whereas Ardagh notes only that a certain relaxation took place in this classic pattern before 1981, Theodore Zeldin, in his impressionistic survey of the French people, claims that this is no longer true.[8] He argues not only that local grievances and needs get more attention in Paris than their equivalents find in other countries, but that it is wrong to view the French bureaucracy as a rigid, monolithic, authoritarian body. Bureaucrats have their pride as experts, they wish to have the approval of the local communities that they serve, they can flatter local notables, they can bargain with the government, they make deals, exchange information, act as mediators. It is interesting that Zeldin, who is a distinguished historian, should say this because it is now acknowledged that the administrative documents that exist in the archives are often misleading about the organisation of power in, say, 19th-century France. The prefect appears submissive and devoted to the interests of the government as he reports back to Paris, but he is, in reality, more concerned about the local notables and his position in that community than he is about the destiny of some minister whose stay in office may be transitory.

Zeldin even suggests that the real dangers of bureaucracy in France come from multiple schizophrenia in the administration (and here he is following the 1979 work on decision-making by Catherine Gremion[9]). There are many state officials; they soak up information from the divided society that France is; they represent different ideas, different interests, different generations. The administration becomes a meeting-place for ideas; there is an "organised anarchy" when it comes to doing anything; reforms become law when they are still filled with ambiguities, and when they are put into practice the results are very different from what was expected. Can one doubt that this will happen to the Socialist reforms? Especially when nationalisations increase state power and when decentralisation is meant to decrease it, when the decentralisation laws will be put into effect by many members of the opposition who were elected to the presidencies of regional councils after the *élections*

[8] *The French*. By THEODORE ZELDIN. Collins, £12.95.

[9] Catherine Gremion, *Profession décideurs: pouvoir des hauts fonctionnaires et réforme de l'Etat* (Paris, 1979).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*cantonales* of March 1982, when officials who are loyal to socialist principles (Rocardian, *CERES*, or somewhere in the middle) cooperate with officials who are conservative or *centriste*.

AN EQUALLY SOPHISTICATED view prevails with regard to regionalism. *Paris et le désert français* is the title of a once-famous book which is no longer relevant and it has not been replaced by *Bordeaux et le désert languedocien* or by *Rouen et le désert normand* or by anything similar, as was once supposed. Two journalists, travelling through the provinces in the months following May 1981, were struck by the vitality of the regions.[10] France no longer has the form of its railway map: that of a star with Paris as its centre. It is rather "*un maillage multiforme*", a suit of mail more supple, more creative, less artificial and better suited for difficult times.

The social problem which attracts the most attention, and awareness of which has undoubtedly been an important factor in the growth of Socialist influence, is that of inequality. Here an attempt is being made to move people away from the over-simplistic view that France is a country (sometimes it is said the country above all others) where inequality prevails, since one Frenchman can earn in a day more money than another Frenchman will earn in a whole year.

In a book which has had remarkable success, François de Closets has examined the whole question of inequality, taking it beyond the simple question of earnings.[11] He examines with great care what he calls the *FNM*, the *Facteurs Non Monétaires* of inequality, such as job-security, hours worked, early retirement, independence, free time, holiday schemes, insurance benefits, arrangements for looking after children, and countless others. He takes specific examples, and demonstrates, for example, how coal miners have benefited from the recognition of the dangers and difficulties of their job, and have been given certain privileges of the *FNM* sort in compensation. These privileges have been extended to all workers in the industry, irrespective of whether or not they are employed at the coal face. But none of these privileges apply to clay mining, although this is now even more dangerous to health than coal mining. He demonstrates how, at La Défense, a telephone operator in one tower has an entirely different contract from a telephone operator in the neighbouring tower, although their work is identical.

De Closets produces a picture of contemporary society which resembles nothing so much as the society of the *Ancien Régime*, where each section of society had its privileges and was seeking to increase them. It is possible to point to those who nowadays have more privileges than others, but the distinctions between them are those of detail rather than class. How can a government create greater equality, as the present government is pledged to do, without simply increasing the lists of privileges, both monetary and non-monetary? How, within the present complexities, can the government hope to establish any uniform rule on, say, a retirement age at 60, and then at 59?

There are those who would say that while this might have been the government's priority when out of office, this is no longer the case. Now the government's priority is to make industry competitive, to reduce the trade deficit and to reconquer the home market. If the rate of unemployment has slowed down, if inflation has dropped in 1982 to single figures (and it is hoped that this can be halved by the end of 1983), the budget deficit remains high and private investment has not picked up. It is argued by the opposition that this is because Socialism is expensive and that the squeeze on profits affects activity. Socialism is

[10] *En passant par la France*. By SIMONNE and JEAN LAÇOUTURE. Editions du Seuil, Fr. 69.

[11] *Toujours Plus*. By FRANÇOIS DE CLOSETS. Grasset, Fr. 69.

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inappropriate for the present, it is argued, as a Socialist government must find economic relations difficult with its more monetarist neighbours. But President Mitterrand is determined, somewhere between pragmatism and realism, to prove that this argument is wrong. It is too soon to draw up a balance-sheet of success and failure. As Mitterrand puts it, "*Le bilan: c'est pour la fin.*"

# Between the Bomb & the Kremlin

## *Strategies for Peace—By* PHILIP TOWLE

FEAR IS ONCE AGAIN having its corrosive effect on public opinion in the democracies. As in the 1930s, and again in the 1950s, dread of war has increasingly polarised attitudes. On the one side the "peace movements" stress the dangers of nuclear war; on the other, Kremlinologists emphasise the menace presented by Soviet capabilities and intentions. As the debate proceeds, it appears to demonstrate the fragility of the consensus on international affairs established in the late 1940s by Harry Truman and Dean Acheson in the United States and by Ernest Bevin and Clement Attlee in Britain.

One response to the danger of nuclear war is to dig a hole in your garden and prepare for the worst. For such pessimists, a marketing consultant, Ivan Tyrrell, has prepared a handbook for survival,[1] which should provide hours of harmless amusement to those who were brought up on *Robinson Crusoe* and are adept at building earthworks and improvising air filters. But, because of the prevalent fears, organised civil defence arouses violent hostility. According to the *New Statesman* journalist Duncan Campbell, in his *War Plan UK*[2]:

> " . . . if Britain is to have real civil defence then . . . we must give up a defence that is predicated on the destruction of the territory and cities of another . . . if we do not do this, then civil defence becomes merely a means of making nuclear weapons more thinkable, threatening and usable."

Yet the whole point of deterrence is to convince a potential opponent that one might decide to use nuclear weapons if attacked, and so dissuade him from taking risks. What for one man is an enhancement of deterrence is, no doubt, the cause for another's growing fears. Thus Campbell's policy of expelling US bases from Britain implies, to me, the break-up of NATO and the drift to war which Western strategy has so effectively prevented since 1945.

"Peace movement" literature is designed rather like a cowboy film. The technique is to expose the heroes and heroines to danger—to describe the horrors of the nuclear holocaust, the end of human history—and then, when all seems lost, produce the cavalry—usually such minor adjustments to world politics as General and Complete Disarmament (abolition of all arms) and the establishment of a world government. Jonathan Schell's survey of our predicament is portentously entitled *The Fate of the Earth*.[3] Accordingly the cover tells us that Dr Helen Caldicott sees it as "the new Bible of our time, the White Paper of our age", and *The Guardian*'s reviewer described it as "simply the most original and searching work yet produced on the meaning of the nuclear arms race." Schell believes that

> "the peril of extinction is the price that the world pays not for 'safety' or 'survival' but for its insistence on continuing to divide itself up into sovereign nations."

Similarly, at the end of his wide-ranging examination of the history of warfare, *The Pursuit of Power*,[4] Professor William H. McNeill calls for

> "a global sovereign power willing and able to enforce a monopoly of atomic weaponry. . . . Nothing less radical than this seems likely to suffice. . . . The alternative appears to be sudden and total annihilation of the human species."

Certainly the far-reaching disarmament measures often envisaged could not be enforced except by an all-powerful international authority. Yet we have been here before, in 1918 and in 1945. The efforts of the founders of the League of Nations and of the UN to reduce the prevalence of warfare need not be mocked, but nothing in the history of these organisations suggests that the cavalry will

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[1] *The Survival Option: A Guide to Living Through Nuclear War*. By IVAN TYRRELL. Jonathan Cape, £7.95.
[2] *War Plan UK: The Truth about Civil Defence in Britain*. By DUNCAN CAMPBELL. Burnett Books, £12.95, paper £6.95.
[3] *The Fate of the Earth*. By JONATHAN SCHELL. Cape £7.95; Picador, £1.95.
[4] *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force and Society since A.D. 1000*. By WILLIAM H. MCNEILL. Basil Blackwell, £15.00.

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arrive in time—that we can establish a world government, or that it would prevent warfare if we could do so. The world has become steadily more heterogeneous with the break-up of the European empires and the growth of Sino-Soviet rivalry. If a world authority were to be established, each of the great blocs—the West, the Third World, the Warsaw Pact, and the Communist Chinese—would fight to prevent it falling into the hands of its rivals. In fact, most modern conflicts are a function of the state's weakness, not of its strength or its predatory instincts: for every inter-state war since 1945 there have been at least ten civil and guerrilla conflicts.

DESPITE THE INADEQUACIES of the nation-state, it is difficult to escape Colin Gray's conclusion, in his *Strategic Studies and Public Policy*,[5] that "the principal actors on the world stage are, and will continue to be, states. Transnational actors are most unlikely to affect more than marginal modifications of the states system." If human survival depended upon the establishment of world government, the outlook would be poor indeed. But, after the failure of US efforts in 1946 to vest control of atomic energy in an international authority, statesmen, military officers, and strategists have all wrestled with the problem of finding a more acceptable way of coming to terms with the new weapons.

Mr Gray, a member of that band of English expatriates who live in the US in order to teach the Americans how to organise their affairs more effectively, has examined Washington's approach to the problem. Although he is a member of the strategic establishment, he does not exaggerate the influence of unofficial strategists, or the adequacy of their advice when it was influential. In the early years of the atomic age, strategists such as Bernard Brodie and William Fox had little influence on US policy, while subsequently, "many of the manifest failures that have misled American policy-makers stemmed from a phase of strategic theorizing (1955–65) wherein the creative impulse far outran the pace of scholarship." Little in Mr Gray's provocative study would hearten the "peace movement." Many liberal strategists are, in his view, too optimistic both about Soviet intentions and about the prospects for US-Soviet arms control. Nevertheless, Schell and Gray are in agreement on rejecting the views of middle-of-the-road commentators about the stability of deterrence. In Gray's view:

> "at some unpredictable point in the next ten or twenty (or more) years, the Soviet leadership may decide that its imperial situation is so desperate that it can keep its essential holdings only by striking out at the encircling imperialists. . . . A general East-West war could erupt out of the very structure of world politics."

Certainly the combination of Soviet political weakness and military strength, rather than the arms race, is the greatest threat to world peace. Western statesmen will have to monitor the evolving situation with caution, and may yet find themselves taking lessons from Palmerston and Disraeli on how to prop up decayed East European empires for the sake of international peace and stability.

If "peace movement" literature is designed like a cowboy film, then modern strategy most resembles kitchen-sink drama. Its authors and directors are determined on a relentless exposé of the seamy side of human intentions and emotions, and adamantly reject "happy endings" or panaceas. Both Schell and Gray rightly stress the connection between strategic analysis and attitudes towards human behaviour. According to Gray

> "contrary to the promises of the Beatitudes, strategists tend to believe that the meek (and the weak) must have their eyes firmly upon heaven because the predatory and the strong will not allow them to keep even what was theirs upon earth."

And Schell points out that

> "the 'idealist' school looks on the human ability to show regard for others as fundamental, and is based on what Gandhi called the law of love. . . . Historically, a belief in the necessity of violence has been the hallmark of the credo of the 'realist'."

Given the mountains of dead produced by Gandhi and his associates during the partition of India, one might think it unwise for Mr Schell to invoke his name; the road to mass destruction in India—as in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s—was paved with high-minded and pacifist intentions. It seems equally unwise of Mr Schell to cite Bertrand Russell in the late 1940s as an advocate of "full global disarmament", since Russell's proposed method of achieving this end was through global hegemony imposed by the threat or use of US nuclear weapons on the Soviet Union.

ON NO SUBJECT do "the idealists" and "the realists" disagree so fundamentally as on the nature and intentions of the Soviet Union. Duncan Campbell argues that a Foreign Office pamphlet reminding people that the Kremlin celebrates the 1917 Revolution with a vast military parade

[5] *Strategic Studies and Public Policy: The American Experience*. By COLIN S. GRAY. University of Kentucky Press, £15.60, $19.50.

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through Red Square, while Britain remembers its War dead with a civilian ceremony at the Cenotaph, is almost akin to accusing the Russians of eating babies. Another pamphlet produced by the British government, which describes the Russians as acting like bullies, would, he believes, not have been out of place in Hitler's Germany. Nevertheless, the military parade through Moscow *is* a pointer to the nature of Soviet society. What other products could they parade? Soviet-made cars based on an obsolete Fiat design, airliners a decade or more behind their Western equivalents? No one who has seen the behaviour of Soviet diplomats towards their Warsaw Pact allies could think the term "bully" out of place, or maintain that the Kremlin is at home in a world of independent and equal states.

In their search for "objectivity", Western intellectuals often equate NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In the West after 1945, according to Professor McNeill

> "freedom collapsed into obedience and bureaucratically channeled behaviour. The springs of obedience and conformity within the Communist lands were similar inasmuch as most Russians and East Europeans . . . also willingly accepted goals defined by their bureaucratic superiors and behaved accordingly."

A belief that the Western democracies have become easier to govern since 1945, or that the East Europeans have willingly accepted their Soviet masters, is surely difficult to substantiate.

GIVEN THE OVERT anti-American feeling in the "peace movement", and its tendency to see NATO as an American device imposed on an unwilling Europe, it is particularly useful to have Sir Nicholas Henderson's meticulous examination of the birth of the alliance.[6] He demonstrates clearly that the alliance was fostered by the Europeans and particularly by Ernest Bevin, and that it was originally the Americans who dragged their feet.

Soviet behaviour at the time NATO was established, as today, has only too frequently confirmed the gloomy prognostications of the pessimists. According to Professor Richard Pipes, in his contribution to *Global Collective Security in the 1980s*[7]

[6] *The Birth of NATO.* By NICHOLAS HENDERSON. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £7.95.

[7] *Global Collective Security in the 1980s.* Edited by GEOFFREY STEWART-SMITH. Foreign Affairs Publishing Company, £9.00.


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> "We can count on international stablility being achieved only if and when the communist system as embodied in the Soviet Union has undergone profound internal change and redirects its energies internally instead of externally."

Given their history and ideology, it is not surprising that Soviet leaders have not always behaved as Western commentators hoped. Ivan Tyrrell's proposed solution to the nuclear problem, in *Survival Option*, is to

> "return to the principle of swapping hostages. In ancient times the rival kingdoms, to maintain peace, exchanged their most treasured sons. Therefore today . . . there is nothing stopping, say, the Russians having a large administrative enclave . . . living in America on a rota basis. . . . It is hard to imagine a better guarantee of peace."

Unfortunately it is not clear that such an exchange of hostages would inhibit the actions of a state whose omnipotent ruler disowned his own son and abandoned all other Soviet servicemen when they were captured by the Germans in World War II.

More seriously, Western strategists from Bernard Brodie onwards have tended to emphasise deterrence, and only rarely tried to see what would happen if deterrence failed and an East-West war broke out. In contrast, the doctrine espoused by Soviet military leaders

> "stipulates a requirement for the capability to wage nuclear war and insists that it would be irresponsible to assume that victory is not theoretically achievable."[8]

American strategists both inside and outside government have also become more concerned with nuclear war. The growing accuracy of nuclear weapons has made it possible to target Soviet defence establishments with more confidence that they will be hit. At the same time, the achievement of strategic parity by the Soviet Union has made the US threat to attack Soviet cities in retaliation for an attack on America's allies or its own defence establishments increasingly incredible. These changes, rather than any desire to fight a nuclear war, lie behind the alterations which have taken place in the declared US strategy, however misinterpreted these alterations may have been.

HARDLY LESS MISINTERPRETED are the reasons why the great powers provide friendly states in the Third World and elsewhere with conventional weapons to protect their independence. "Merchants of Death" have been a favourite target for abuse since the 1920s, yet without the conventional arms trade the great powers would have one less means of helping friendly states. Accordingly, they would be more likely to employ their own forces, thus increasing the possibility that they would come into direct confrontation with each other. All the more reason, then, to eschew the emotional approach and to welcome Andrew J. Pierre's addition to the literature of the problem in *The Global Politics of Arms Sales*.[9]

If, as seems probable, Professor McNeill is right to stress over-population as a major cause of warfare then the Third World is unlikely to grow more peaceful over the next decades. Arms transfers are clearly the best method of helping friendly states, such as Malaya or Kenya, but if these fail should Britain reorientate its defence policy away from Europe so that it could play a greater part in these turbulent areas? Michael Chichester and John Wilkinson (who was private secretary to John Nott, the former Defence Secretary) argue in their book *The Uncertain Ally*[10] that it should. The strategic dilemma is whether to prepare for the more likely contingencies in the Third World, or for the more threatening but (because of the stability of deterrence) less likely contingencies in Europe. Their book is unfortunately timed because, whatever the merits of their case, the strains under which NATO is already suffering make it unwise to consider in 1983 any reductions in British land forces in Germany.

A consensus on the broad outlines of Western foreign policy is then necessary before one can risk changing the details such as the balance of British defence policy. But what prospects are there for such a consensus? Publishers provide a stream of factual and accurate summaries of the current state of weaponry[11] but in the competition for viewing ratings between cowboy films, kitchen-sink dramas, and motor-repair manuals, the cowboys are likely to emerge victorious. There is moreover a natural tendency for like-minded groups to meet together, in the way that 80 diplomats and strategists assembled at Leeds Castle in August 1981 to "consider a global strategy for the defence of world freedom." If the strategists and

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[8] Benjamin Lambeth, in *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*. Edited by DOUGLAS J. MURRAY and PAUL R. VIOTTI. Johns Hopkins University Press, £9.75, $16.85.

[9] *The Global Politics of Arms Sales*. By ANDREW J. PIERRE. Princeton University Press, £14.10, $26.00; paper, £4.20, $9.25.

[10] *The Uncertain Ally: British Defence Policy 1960-1990*. By MICHAEL CHICHESTER and JOHN WILKINSON.

[11] *Strategic Weapons: An Introduction*. By NORMAN POLMAR. Crane Russak and Company, $16.50, paper $8.95. *Weapons of Tomorrow*. By BRIAN BECKETT. Orbis Publishing, £7.95. *War Facts Now: The Weapons, The Systems, The Strategies*. By CHRISTY CAMPBELL. Fontana Original, £2.50.

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the spokesmen for the "peace movement" do meet, there can be little real dialogue, since they can agree neither on the nature of man, nor on the role of the state, neither on Soviet intentions and capabilities nor on the function of weapons in the international system.

# Bad Times, Better Ways?

## *The Search for Solutions—By* DAVID DONNISON

TO UNDERSTAND where we are heading we should start by looking back to see where we've come from. New books about the economic and political dilemmas of Britain and other late capitalist societies appear every month—not since the end of the Second World War has such a spate of "political economy" been published. Is any agreement emerging about the problems we face or the solutions they call for?

Samuel Beer, who wrote one of the best publicised of these recent books, *Britain Against Itself,*[1] describes the three decades which followed the War as a period of political consensus. But to those who lived through these times, "consensus" is not a good way of describing the first bitterly contentious years of the Attlee Government, the Suez fiasco of 1956, and the recurrent battles over attempts to reform the Rent Acts, to tax the profits made out of land by developers, to impose charges on a free health service, and to reorganise secondary education.

What Beer may be trying to say is something rather different: there was a broad measure of agreement among a loose coalition of reformers about the general directions in which the country should be travelling. That agreement, hammered out since the turn of the century through the experience of world wars and depressions, was expressed in a crude but serviceable rhetoric about "fair shares", "equal opportunities", "abolishing the poor laws", "meeting needs without regard to the ability to pay", and "replacing the profit motive" by "extending the socialised areas of the economy." This rhetoric was full of unresolved contradictions, but it was widely understood by a lot of ordinary people who knew well that the world they lived in could be made a lot fairer and a lot more equal before anyone need start worrying about the exact meaning and implications of such terms.

Ranked against this coalition of reformers was another phalanx amongst whom people like Quintin Hogg (in the political arena) and Friedrich von Hayek (among the academics) wrote contradictory polemics. Between these poles the debates of the day were articulated. Indeed, too many complex issues were grossly simplified so that they could be crammed into the crude categories of these arguments.

The experience of the depression had bequeathed to the reformers the most fundamental of their convictions: the determination that the country must never again fall into mass unemployment. And thanks to John Maynard Keynes and his followers, governments had since 1944 been convinced that this guarantee could be honoured.

The most important aspects of Keynesian economics were political, as Thomas Balogh makes clear in a moving passage of *The Irrelevance of Conventional Economics:* [2]

> "Full employment is . . . not merely a means to higher production and faster expansion. It is also an aim in itself, weakening the dominance of men over men, dissolving the master-servant relation. It is the greatest engine for the attainment by all of human dignity and greater equality. . . . Most other social advances since 1940 were, if not a direct consequence, at least conditioned by it."

The Keynesian way of talking about the economy and its management gave new meaning to the responsibilities of government because it asserted that the health of the economy depended on the capacity of all citizens to meet their needs—to consume. It was thus the function of governments to ensure a decent living for all their people. That reinforced the lesson of total war: that in time of crisis a nation will only survive if its leaders can muster and retain the willing support of all their people. The hope offered to those people in the darkest days of the War by the proposals in the Beveridge Report was more important than an extra army.

Academics missed this point. The "conservatisation" of Keynesian doctrines (as Lord Balogh calls it) began at once. Cambridge dons, anxious

[1] *Britain Against Itself: The Political Contradictions of Collectivism.* By SAMUEL BEER, Faber, £9.50.

[2] *The Irrelevance of Conventional Economics.* By THOMAS BALOGH. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.50.

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to secure scientific status for themselves and Civil Service jobs for their students, sought to make these doctrines more "rigorous", "consistent" and "determinate." For that a single criterion of efficiency was required. Before long J. R. Hicks was distinguishing the size of the national income from its distribution and insisting on the primacy of the former, while D. H. Robertson was deriding economists who recognised the essentially political character of their discipline as men tempted to ape the prophets and priests. Others later redefined full employment to mean that state of the economy which produced a tolerably slow rate of inflation. They got their knighthoods and their pupils rose to power in the public services and the universities, but the nation failed to grasp the heavy moral responsibilities entailed by the commitment to full employment. Only by formulating and constantly repairing some general consensus about the distribution of the nation's resources—their division between work and leisure, between wages and social benefits, and between rich and poor—could an explosion of competing and increasingly inflationary claims be avoided.

FOR A WHILE these dangers were not appreciated. Wartime controls helped to keep the lid on inflationary pressures. The aftermath of imperial preferences in trade, the general post-War recovery of the world economy, and the improvement in the terms of trade helped too. The "Phillips curve", discovered in the late 1950s, showed how employment and prices were related. But the profession interpreted this as a scientific law describing a fixed relationship between unemployment and inflation, not as a political observation noting the current (and declining) levels of human solidarity and constraints on greed.

The rest of the story is only too familiar. Labour and Conservative governments alike declined to formulate any general principles for the distribution of incomes and social benefits. On the Right it was held that government had no business to be pronouncing on such matters: they were for the market to decide. And on the Left . . . ? Socialism may once have been the language of priorities, but trade unionism is the language of differentials.

As the world economy faltered and the British economy foundered, governments lurched back and forth—sometimes making clumsy attempts to stem the rising tide of claims for wage increases, hand-outs for industry, tax reliefs and social benefits; and sometimes (before elections) distributing goodies all round. Unwilling or unable to impose any effective discipline on the rich, governments found that the trade unions in turn were, not surprisingly, incapable of restraining their members. The workers would wait only if the government could promise them that everyone else would be waiting too, and that there would at the end of the day be benefits which were really worth waiting for.

British governments were unable to honour either of these promises. Thus competitive demands for a larger share of the cake grew more strident and inflation grew apace. Meanwhile more and more of the young, the elderly, the unskilled, and the ethnic minorities were squeezed out of work. Once out, the unemployed found themselves politically neutered: unable, in most cases, to join a trade union; offered lower benefits on more humiliating terms than those available to people dependent on the state for other reasons; and unable to gain a hearing unless they belonged to a community which was prepared to resort to bombs or riots. (Even that has not done much good to anyone thus far.)

What can be done about this sorry state of affairs? Some writers attribute the plight of Western nations partly to the decay of social solidarity brought about by commercial interests, promoting a vulgar "consumerism" from which they made handsome profits. But, as Samuel Beer points out, all the main political parties in Britain competed with each other to exploit our greed, no longer claiming to build a society based on higher ideals, but offering instead a political supermarket which alleged it had better buys than those on offer in the rival shop. As the voters learnt that these promises were no more trustworthy than those of the detergent companies whose claims were puffed by the same ad-men, they focused their demands increasingly upon the most immediate, concrete, selfish goals.

IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, most of the books I have been reading call for a "remoralisation" of society—a return to more humane values. But how is that to be brought about? Peter Marris, in a perceptive introduction to his book on *Community Planning and Conceptions of Change*,[3] argues that social movements and the policies they bring into being depend upon a "structure of meanings" which

> "organise the relationship between three aspects of reality: the observable associations between categories of events; the emotions these events provoke; and the purposes they entail.... Making policy is a form of learning—the extension of a set of assumptions to encompass unfamiliar situations, so that these become intelligible and manageable."

[3] *Community Planning and Conceptions of Change*. By PETER MARRIS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £9.95.

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He traces the stumbling search for political learning made by central and local authorities, community workers and local activists, first in the community development projects and then in successive initiatives for the renewal of the London Docklands. Although the learning was often painful, all concerned were gradually getting their act together: giving greater weight to economic objectives, involving local people and their representatives more effectively, creating a sensible framework in which the private sector would make its contribution, and relating the whole project to the broader development of the surrounding region. Then, as one of the most ambitious programmes of urban renewal ever attempted was about to take off, the arrival of the Thatcher government and the collapse of the British economy combined to destroy the whole enterprise. It is a bitter story, not yet finished.

Marris writes about the endeavours of many people, in the private and the public sectors, on the Right and on the Left, to create

> "a society less empty of compassion and co-operative endeavour. The reintegration of meaning and action is finally a question of the meaning of society itself. What, if anything, do we all want to belong to? The political and economic pressures, whose interaction I have tried to trace, are not consolidating an overriding class interest. They tend rather to provoke a disintegrative competition for personal security, from which the most powerful have most to gain."

"The collective meaning of social policy", he concludes, "is in desperate need of restatement."

Thomas Balogh, an economist confronting the same problems on a national scale, gives us the most devastating indictment we have yet had of the failings of his own profession. But when it comes to solutions, the programme he offers us—whether right or wrong—has plainly been rejected by the British electorate. He calls for "socialist measures" which will "bring about a basic change in . . . power relationships"; a more forcefully egalitarian incomes policy "extending to the very highest levels", and a tougher line with trade unions which are "perhaps the most serious threat to economic and social stability." The incomes and prices policy which is fundamental to the success of this programme will be more likely to succeed "the faster the domestic product grows."

Quite. But why has Britain, under governments of every kind, been so unsuccessful in achieving a respectable rate of growth? And how can that be changed? Balogh has no convincing answers.

FOR MORE FUNDAMENTAL explanations of our plight we must turn to the most important of the books I have been reading: Mancur Olson's


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*The Rise and Decline of Nations*.[4] If the title suggests a work on the scale of Adam Smith's famous book, that is not far short of Olson's ambitions. He argues that much of the folklore about economic success and failure has some validity, but that no one has yet formulated a convincing general theory about these things. His own theory is tested by extensive comparisons between the performances of different countries, different industries and different parts of his own enormous country, the United States.

Stated briefly, Olson's conclusions are that stable societies with unchanged boundaries tend in time to accumulate all sorts of collective organisations and informal collusions. The most effective of these will be small groups with uniform interests. Organisations representing larger numbers of people with more diverse interests will form later, but an equal and balanced representation of all groups is never achieved. These coalitions find they gain far more by trying to divert more of the nation's resources to themselves, or to the causes they espouse, than by trying to increase the sum total of those resources. Thus their aims are distributional; and their style tends to be exclusive, for once they have gained sufficient members to get what they want each new member reduces the benefits acquired by earlier recruits. They tend to resist innovation, to protect their markets, and to slow down the nation's response to change. Their decision-making procedures are unavoidably cumbrous, and their activities tend to enlarge and complicate the apparatus of government to no productive end. "On balance", Olson says, "they reduce efficiency and aggregate income . . . and make political life more divisive."

Wars and revolutions tend temporarily to disrupt these patterns. So do enlargements of the boundaries within which a country may freely trade—not so much because tariff reductions directly promote trade but because the creation of a larger common market tends to disrupt many coalitions and cosy collusions, and it takes these groups a few years to rebuild their networks of influence with a more distant centre of power.

Trade unions, Olson argues, play important parts in each country's tendency to decline into an increasingly stagnant economic and social conservatism. But cartels, trade associations, and professional bodies play even larger parts. Countries in which bigger groupings with "encompassing" aims play a more dominant part—major political movements bearing, or hoping to bear, responsibilities of government—tend to do better because these encompassing organisations have an interest in promoting growth. (This, he claims, explains the relatively good economic record of a stable society like Sweden.) But the best performances will generally be found in countries, regions and cities which have recently passed through a turbulent period in which most distributional coalitions and collusions were destroyed—provided these places are expected to enjoy stability in future.

SINCE FEW WILL WANT to stage a major war or revolution in the hope of a temporarily productive aftermath, this theory offers no comforting conclusions to the Left or to the Right. Olson follows the monetarists in arguing that no "macro" policy for the nation will work better than the "micro" policies which affect individual plants, professions, and other working groups. But he follows the neo-Keynesians in arguing that *laissez-faire* will not in stable societies lead to full employment or growing competitive efficiency or fair shares for the poor and the unorganised. He makes various recommendations but offers no panaceas. Searching rather desperately for a happy ending, he concludes:

> "May we not then reasonably expect, if special interests are . . . harmful to economic growth, full employment, coherent government, equal opportunity, and social mobility, that students of the matter will become increasingly aware of this as time goes on? And that the awareness eventually will spread to larger and larger proportions of the population? And that this wider awareness will greatly limit the losses from the special interests?"

As a teacher (working in a profession which is rife with the kind of coalitions and collusions which Olson condemns), I cannot match his confidence in the power of education.

Olson's analysis omits a lot of important things. His measures of economic success—multifarious though they are—rely wholly on official statistics of the formal economy. No weight is given to the domestic economy which operates within households, or the various informal economies which never come to the attention of tax-gatherers and official statisticians. Neither is any weight given to the contribution which culture—tolerance and mutual support among neighbours and workmates, for example—makes to human welfare. If those things had been taken into account, some of the positive effects of distributional coalitions and collusions might have been set alongside their undoubted negative effects. (It may be inefficient that dockers and university teachers can stay in their jobs till they retire, or get handsomely compensated if they are compelled to retire early, but in these precarious times it certainly makes a big difference to them and their families.) Some discussion of these issues might have thrown light on

[4] *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation and Social Rigidities*. By MANCUR OLSON. Yale University Press, £8.95, $14.95.

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the puzzling fact—never mentioned by Olson—that, despite their poor economic record, the British score pretty highly in international comparisons of people's general satisfaction with their lives and the countries in which they live; higher, in most respects, than the economically all-conquering Japanese.

Nevertheless *The Rise and Decline of Nations* is a landmark: a rigorous but thoroughly readable work of economics which also draws, as economists should, on history, politics and sociology. It will prove influential in policy debate and in shaping future research.

WHAT CONCLUSIONS should the ordinary citizen—or the ordinary Prime Minister, for that matter—draw from this literature? First we should note the things which none of these authors are saying: the dogs which don't bark. No one is saying that a modern economy cannot use the labour of the unemployed, or that we should henceforth give up talking about unemployment and instead focus our best efforts on sharing out leisure more fairly. (How could anyone who has walked around Liverpool or visited an average prison or mental hospital conclude that nothing more remains to be done in this country? And if it were true that technological progress brings unavoidable unemployment, why is unemployment most common in the least innovative, not the most innovative, economies?)

All agree that the health of the economy and its capacity to maintain a reasonable rate of growth and change are crucial if the country is to remain governable in a civilised way. All agree that large-scale, involuntary unemployment is humanly intolerable, politically destructive, and unnecessary. And all agree that restraint must somehow be imposed on the selfish demands of powerful interest groups—including the richest people as well as those whose strength lies in organised numbers. Incomes policies of some convincing sort must become—in Balogh's telling phrase—"a new province for law and order." By itself, that may not be enough to free us from the combination of rising prices and rising unemployment known as "stagflation", but it is an essential first step to that end.

Effective policies for incomes and prices will demand a sense of shared responsibility, of social solidarity, which has to be based on new moral values—or a return to old ones. That will call for the learning of new social meanings, to use the language of Peter Marris.

To achieve that, "encompassing" organisations—concerned about the nation as a whole and

The *Salisbury Review*
A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATIVE THOUGHT

ISSUE No. 2 – Winter 1983

*Essays and Book Reviews*

*THE WRITERS*

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not just about sectional interests within it—must play an important part in formulating the issues and contributing to the debate. Of these, the most important is the state itself. The apparatus of government and the people who wield its powers should always be sceptically appraised: they can too easily be captured and misused by sinister or selfish interests. But those on the Right or the Left who treat the state as the enemy threaten to destroy what may become the only remaining institution which retains some nationwide credibility—some capacity for responding to the needs of the whole population. (In Northern Ireland we have already reached that position.)

There is no sign that the British are yet prepared to tackle the politically daunting problems posed by this analysis, or that we have a government in sight which would be capable of the task. The present régime is leading us in the opposite direction—socially divisive, destructive of national unity and of humane public service. Its economic policies, as Balogh points out, may yet "validate Marx's analysis." But Balogh himself, like Marris and Olson, offers no programme which would at present carry much conviction with the British electorate—or even with the Labour Party, many of whose leading spirits seem committed to the incomes policies of the jungle.

We may have to wait for a crisis sufficiently frightening to compel people to think afresh. IMF loans, oil revenues, and other safety belts have saved us from going over the brink thus far; but, since we have made little use of the breathing space won for us in such ways, these safety belts are part of our problem, not a contribution to its solution.

No one should complacently assume that widespread violence, the bankruptcy of major public authorities—or whatever form a national crisis may take—would necessarily shift us in humane or constructive directions: they may instead lead to the arming of the police, the deployment of the army on our streets, and the suppression of civil liberties. (Again, Ulster shows the trend.) But meanwhile people of good will can only work to make their little bit of the world a saner, more humane, and more productive place—giving political culture, and production in the domestic and informal economies their proper weight alongside the activities measured by official statisticians.

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN about the work and aspirations of groups who are doing that with a disregard—sometimes naive, sometimes admirable—for most of the issues discussed in the other books I've been reading, look at Betty Friedan's latest book, *The Second Stage*.[5] It's repetitive, rambling, polemical. Yet she is saying very important things; and her track record as a social reformer, since she wrote her first book *The Feminine Mystique*, must command respect. The attack on men and "the family" mounted by the shriller feminists in the first stage of their movement was, she argues, a natural over-reaction—and a mistake. Along with their strident demands for free abortion, "gay rights" and so on, it alienated many of their potential supporters, and handed the real reactionaries a powerful weapon—the claim that they were "pro-family" and "pro-life."

The excesses of the first stage distracted the movement from what should have been its chief concerns: its drive to enable men and women alike to achieve greater fairness in the division of family responsibilities, to free them to choose whatever family form suits them best, and to gain public tolerance for all humane, caring relationships. "The family", Betty Friedan says, "is whoever you come home to." The earlier campaigns for equal opportunities must still be pressed to a conclusion, but in future the movement should be increasingly concerned with things like new ways of dividing and sharing work in workplaces and in homes; new house designs and neighbourhood lay-outs and new forms of mortgage lending which make new forms of household easier to organise; and the introduction of family allowances (not yet available in the USA) and better collective day care for children.

Betty Friedan's book, like Peter Marris's, reminds us of things which Olson seems to forget. There are some kinds of collective action, some kinds of community grouping, without which the world would be a meaner and more barbaric place. How can we foster and develop these without also tying ourselves up in a web of cosy and ultimately impoverishing restrictive practices? This is the dilemma we face.

If we do ultimately encounter a serious national crisis, a lot of things will change in a hurry. There will be no time for research, for Royal Commissions, or for cautious experiment. The biggest social changes occur only when they have to: when previous ways of proceeding are no longer among the options available. New patterns then emerge as hurried improvisations. Those who have good experience to offer at that point may find their example seized upon and widely adopted. Innovators and visionaries in the movements concerned with women's rights, race relations, ecology and conservation remind us that bad times like the present may be good times in which to try out better ways of doing things. If there is not enough good practice in sight when the time for larger changes comes, there will be plenty of people around—the

[5] *The Second Stage*. By BETTY FRIEDAN. Michael Joseph, £8.95.

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bully boys and fascists—with bad practice to offer.

New social issues are first posed and new patterns of human relations are first tried out not by academics but by ordinary people tackling their own daunting problems in brave and intelligent ways. The academics, who write most of the books, contribute later, when the action is already under way.

# Russian Censorship, Then & Now

## *On Police-State Methods—By* LEONARD SCHAPIRO

"SOVIET LITERATURE is the mirror of a transformed and homogeneous society. . . ." These words by the Moscow editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* imply that authors are expected to lie, since Soviet society is neither "homogeneous" nor particularly "transformed"—many, of course, do not follow Chakovsky's precept. But the dictum also illustrates the gulf between censorship today in Russia and in the 19th century. For much of the century literature was virtually free (in spite of his title, Professor Ruud deals with books as well as the press[1]); and even when it was not, restrictions were irksome rather than prescriptive. The point illustrates the essential difference between a police state and an ideological totalitarian state: the police state is generally content to prohibit rather than to prescribe. It is true that 19th-century Russia did spend considerable sums "on bribing domestic or foreign newspapers and authors to portray Russia in a favourable light." Professor P. A. Zaionchkovsky has discovered in the archives of the Third Department the large sums that were spent on this kind of enterprise—over half the total "secret fund" in 1880, for example. The signal lack of results produced by such expenditure suggests that the security authorities might have been better employed in searching out the conspirators preparing for the murder of Alexander II a year later.

As Dr Ruud's careful and scholarly investigation shows (and I believe it is the first comprehensive account in English), Russia in the 19th century was very far from being the land of savage censorship that it is popularly believed to be. What appears to have taken place is a two-fold process. On the one hand, there was a long period of the kind of "dismantling" of restrictions which (according to the late Professor Leontovitch) is that which alone characterises liberalism. This gradual development, which culminated in the virtual abolition of censorship in 1906, was the result of the willing, or unwilling, responsiveness of the autocracy to the continuing pressure of enlightened public opinion. But, on the other hand (as always in Russian history) the liberal trend, strong as it was, was constantly under threat from the traditional, arbitrary barbarity which was never far below the surface.

The reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855) was the grimmest period of censorship. The Emperor himself took a constant interest in what was published, intervened in countless individual cases, and overruled (and penalised) censors whom he considered too lenient. This became particularly evident after the revolutionary year 1848 had caused serious alarm in Russia. The Russian historian of censorship under Nicholas I, Lemke, described 1848 to 1855 as "The Epoch of Censorship Terror." One could tell countless stories of the harassment of authors for reasons which appear too trivial even to take note of. In 1855 Turgenev was only allowed to publish *A Month in the Country* provided that the heroine was transformed from a married woman into a widow—thus destroying the main point of the play. (This was, of course, on moral grounds.) But in 1852 an obituary on Gogol, which referred to him as "great", earned Turgenev, by Nicholas's personal decree, a month in the guard-house, followed by indefinite exile on his estate. One could multiply such instances an hundredfold. The diary of Nikitenko, a most enlightened and liberal-minded man, who for over forty years occupied various posts in the censorship, bristles with indignation at similar incidents. (It was owing to the good fortune that *Dead Souls* was read for censorship by him that the novel was published.)

STILL, WHAT WAS perhaps more remarkable than the idiocies of a bigoted and, at times, illiterate censorship, haunted by the Emperor's constant fear of rebellion, was the rich content of the literature which escaped through its net. All of Gogol, the best of Turgenev and Goncharov, for example, appeared before 1865. Even more remarkable was

[1] *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804–1906.* By CHARLES A. RUUD. University of Toronto Press, $39.00, £24.00.

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the emergence of serious political journals which between them founded and nurtured the growth of the radical and liberal *intelligentsia*, and which survived with little damage the "reign of terror" after 1848. It was the *Contemporary* (founded by Pushkin in 1856, the year before he was killed), for example, which, with censorship approval in 1863 published Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?*, written in prison. Appalling as it is in terms of literary merit, it inspired a generation of revolutionaries—among them the future Lenin, who read it at the age of 17 in 1887 (after the execution of his brother Alexander Ulyanov) and who later recounted that it had "turned him inside out." It was also during the reign of Nicholas I that the enlightened view developed among some public figures that preliminary and bureaucratic censorship should be abolished, and that writers should merely be answerable to the law if they published seditious, blasphemous, or libellous matter. But such views were clearly premature—until the reform of the law in 1864 for the first time provided Russia with a system of uncorrupt courts which conformed to civilised European procedures. It was perhaps the dismal state of the legal system before 1865 which accounted for the qualified approval of censorship, provided it was liberal and rational, which was occasionally voiced by Pushkin, the historian Granovsky, or Gogol.

THE CENSORSHIP REFORM of 1865 was a tremendous stride forward in the evolution of liberalism in Russia. Yet, at the same time, it retained a degree of arbitrary power so that the autocracy could always, in characteristic Russian fashion, take away with the left hand what it had granted with the right. The movement for reform was inspired by Alexander II, who, while he did not believe in liberal principles, did realise the need for Russia to move along more rational lines, in tune with Western Europe. The Emperor had, indeed, encouraged a good deal of relatively free discussion around the projected emancipation of the serfs—though not to the extent of permitting the founding of a new journal devoted to discussion of problems connected with the emancipation which a group of liberals had planned.

The decree and regulations of 1865 run to 17 pages. Very broadly, preliminary censorship was abolished for all periodicals in both capitals which wished for this, all original writings of more than ten signatures (160 pages) and translations of more than 320 pages. (University and Academy publications were exempt everywhere.) The Ministry of the Interior retained general jurisdiction over censorship, and for this purpose set up a special Administration. Permission had to be obtained to start a new periodical, and a host of detailed regulations was laid down for editors and publishers. Copies had to be submitted, and a warning could follow: a third warning resulted in suspension. The Minister could institute proceedings in the courts for alleged breaches of the law. But there was also a long list of additional offences, aimed at preventing the undermining of confidence in the established order, or the law, or property. Book stores could stock all books printed in Russia, as well as foreign books "not included in the general catalogue of forbidden books."

The administrative warning system was far from a formality: in the first five years of the reformed rules there were 16 "first warnings", and eight "third warnings" (followed by suspension). A provision in the regulations that the text of the warning had to be published possibly acted as an inhibiting factor in some cases. Before the reform the censor's admonitions remained unknown to the public, which had to wait for many years before their, often hilarious, content was dug out of the archives by industrious editors and scholars. But the long struggle against the powers of the censor which ensued between 1865 and 1906 was largely fuelled by a new factor—the emergence in Russia of a press comparable to that which existed in Western Europe. If it had not been for the senseless assassination of Alexander II on 1 March 1881, which retarded the progress of liberalism in Russia for many years, the flourishing new press would have won greater liberty than that provided in 1865—such as an end to administrative penalties, and much more freedom for all except the most radical publications. By that date newspapers had won a mass readership and respected daily papers began to show signs of independence. Telegraph agencies and technical improvements played an important part in these developments.

ONE OF THE MOST remarkable features of the gradual dismantling of censorship was the role of the reformed courts. By the end of the 1860s, "the courts provided writers, editors and publishers with a defence against government interference, and with several levels of appeal. . . ." The Criminal Code enabled the judges to permit general social criticism, so long as it did not attack specific individuals or institutions. It also recognised the right of the press to report without penalty facts which were in the public record. Powerful and courageous advocates played a notable part in these developments which were no mean achievement in a country which until 1865 had suffered from courts, far below in their standards from those of the civilised world. All in all, by the end of the '60s press trials were becoming "extremely difficult for the prosecution to win."

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Book publication also continued to expand after 1865. A notable feature of this development was the mass production of books for the peasant market—for village schools and for enabling adults to learn to read. One such project was initiated by Tolstoy who (with the aid of Sytin, the main publisher for peasants) worked out a scheme for a cheap, simple series which would reflect his moral teachings. Writers and artists contributed their services free. By the late 1880s Sytin had produced a hundred titles in more than twelve million copies, which were sold in the villages by pedlars for one and a half kopecks a copy. However the peasants still preferred their traditional picture-story books. In 1872 the censorship was given additional administrative powers against uncensored books which they objected to, but which were beyond the reach of the ordinary process of law in the courts. But book publishing continued to expand. It doubled within five years of the new rules, and increased in the 1880s.

The autocracy seems to have been powerless to halt the awakening tide of an ever-growing enlightened public opinion, which successfully asserted its right, in the face of all the harassment mustered against it, to criticise, to discuss and to suggest. Deprived of all voice in the public affairs of the state, it won for itself a private arena from which the autocracy never succeeded in excluding it. The revolutionary year of 1905 was almost entirely sparked off by the liberal intelligentsia which had been frustrated in its attempt to persuade the autocracy to allow them even modest participation in central government—the revolutionary parties and "Bloody Sunday" at most fanned the flames ignited by the liberals. In 1906 censorship was virtually abolished.

THE WHOLE STORY of 19th-century censorship shows in the clearest relief the limits of power of a police state, and the difference of such a polity from a totalitarian society.

A police state harasses writers, even silences them occasionally. Its object is to prevent the emergence of truth in certain areas, and to protect the established order. But it shares a common language with the writers. Moreover, after 1865 the Russian authorities were unable to prevent the adjudication of the courts in individual cases; and where a fairly honest legal system comes into being, arbitrariness comes to an end.

The object of the totalitarian state is similar: where it differs from the police state (if this is still the true description of Russia after the reforms of the 1860s) is in its methods. In the first place it invents a language of its own, a language of lies, obfuscations and "double-speak" in order to conform to the ideology and to conceal reality. Writers who stray outside this idiom stand out like a sore thumb. *Dr. Zhivago* is not anti-communist, let alone anti-Soviet. The reason why the Soviet authorities banned it was because it was written in a truthful idiom, not the "Sovietese" considered appropriate for accounts of the Revolution and the Civil War. But there are two other differences between censorship old and new, which makes the second so much more effective an instrument of repression. The press today is state-owned as well as state-controlled: in the 19th century it was overwhelmingly privately owned. Above all, the Soviet writer is completely denied access to the courts, even the dishonest Party-line courts that operate in all cases which have any political aspect.

THE STORY OF censorship in 19th-century Russia is part of the history of the rise of a responsible, educated and enlightened stratum of society, thirsting for the right to participate in shaping the policy of central government—and persistently refused that right. The revolutions of 1905, and ultimately that of 1917 were the result. No doubt there were many reactionaries in 1905 and even in 1917 who solemnly said "I told you so", and blamed what had happened on the reforms of the 1860s. Yet, even if it is conceivable to imagine that

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after the Crimean War Russia could have resisted the many social and economic pressures for change, the outstanding intellectual renaissance which took place in the 19th century could have been kept under only by the kind of tyranny that would have made present-day restrictions look like a boarding-school for young ladies (to use a favourite expression of Lenin).

Dr Ruud has amassed a wealth of material which he has analysed with sound judgment and good scholarly methods. His style is not attractive, and his book is not made easier to follow by what appears to be only superficial acquaintance with legal terminology. The short introductory chapter on earlier censorship repeats some of the familiar misconceptions about Catherine II—for example, that she closed down journals because she disapproved of their contents. In fact, there is no evidence for this: the reading public was at the time very small, and journals like *The Drone* and *All Sorts of Things* folded for financial reasons. Dr Ruud might with advantage have read Professor Isabel de Madariaga's definitive history of Catherine's reign. But there is no doubt that his book is a valuable and welcome contribution to our understanding of the Russian 19th century.

# Zionists & Jews

## *Religious Strains, Political Difficulties—By* MAX BELOFF

FOR THOSE WHO would understand contemporary Israel, it is necessary to understand the Zionist movement. This remains true even though the population of Israel is increasingly drawn from Jews who were remote from that movement in its formative stages, and were only enabled to leave their places of residence in the Arab world because of that movement's political and military success at the time of the ending of the Mandate and the War of Independence.

But Zionist history except in bare and familiar outline is exceptionally difficult. It requires an understanding of 19th-century gentile society as well as Jewish society and of the nationalist and revolutionary movements which convulsed that century especially in Central and Eastern Europe from which Zionism derived most of its popular strength. A great diversity of circumstance, character, and outlook existed among its leaders and among the powerful opposition to the movement, itself much divided, that helped to frame within Jewry the terms of the debate. In addition, there is the technical point that the documents, published and unpublished, upon which the historian must rely are in many languages—Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian, Polish, English and French, not to speak of Turkish and Arabic. Israel may be becoming a monoglot society as immigration slows down and new generations step forward; but the historian of Zionism must still be a polyglot.

Ever since he published (in 1975), his *Origins of Zionism*, it has been clear that in David Vital, an Oxford-educated Israeli with a family background steeped in Zionism, Zionism has found its historian, at least where the English-speaking world is concerned. Professor Vital's new work[1] consolidates the position won for him by the earlier volume, and excites the appetite for the promised third volume which will bring the story to its apparent triumph in the Balfour Declaration.

The present work covers, with the same scholarly breadth, detachment and excitement as its predecessor, the years stretching from 1897, and the first Zionist Congress, to 1906. Into this decade were crowded Theodor Herzl's short period of leadership, the abortive negotiations with the Sultan of Turkey, the attempts to find an alternative to Palestine (and particularly the "Uganda" affair), the impact upon Jewry of the 1905 Russian Revolution and the pogroms of the revolutionary period.

The narrative has to shift from Eastern to Western Europe, from the pale of settlement to capital cities, from Istanbul to London, Odessa, Vilna. In dealing with these shifts and with the individuals involved, Professor Vital shows the sureness of touch that is the mark of the true historian. But even more important is the fact that the author can enter fully into the ideas and prejudices both of the different schools into which Zionism was and remained divided, and into the no less significant views of its opponents. For the former, the question—highlighted in the Uganda controversy—was how, if the essential was statehood for the Jews, one was to make certain that the State was not merely populated by Jews but was in some sense Jewish. Had Herzl, the typical emancipated Jew, overlooked this aspect of what he was trying

[1] *Zionism: The Formative Years*. By DAVID VITAL. Oxford University Press, £22.50.

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to do? And connected with this theme, though different from it, there was the whole question of the relationship between the Zionist movement and the Jewish religion—an issue that survives to perplex (if not to plague) contemporary Israel.

AMONG THE OPPONENTS were those leaders, coming from the Jewish masses, for whom Palestine could provide a home for at best only a small proportion of the poverty-stricken and persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe, and who asked what hope of a decent life it offered to those who would never get there (even pessimists did not foresee the Holocaust). There were also, then as later, those in Western Europe who still believed that "assimilation" was the correct answer to the Jewish problem and who feared the impact upon their own status as Jewish citizens of their respective countries of the existence of a "Jewish State" to which it might be held their allegiance would be owing.

For those seeking to looking into the future, there were the views of the London *Times* (offered in relation to the Uganda project) that a small Jewish State might not be able to afford full scope to the talents which the Jews had so abundantly displayed wherever they had been allowed to

> "men worthy to take part in the councils of Empires would be compelled to confine their attention to matters of a comparatively trivial character . . . the Jew of Uganda would be almost certain before very long to regard himself as the sole heir of the promises made to his fathers, and would regard the cosmopolitan financier, or the great musician, or the great statesman as one who had fallen from his first love and had ceased to do his first works . . . the experience of two thousand years has shown that the Jew, in circumstances which promote narrowness, becomes not only narrow, but intolerant and persecuting."

By 1906, however, neither Uganda nor Palestine (which *The Times* rightly saw would be the land Jews would crave for) were available. Some could hope that alleviation for the Jewish plight would come from a more liberal Russia, and that working together with all those who hoped that this would come about was the most obvious course for Russian Jewry to follow. But such ideas could appeal only to the more or less emancipated Jewish middle class. For the masses, only emigration seemed to offer real hope, and so the Zionists set themselves to the hard practical tasks of preparing for immigration, and on arrival to creating what they could by their own labour in the unpromising circumstances of Turkish Palestine. Out of this accent upon manual labour came the other feature of classical Zionism, its socialist orientation. On all these and many other matters, Professor Vital is a reliable and learned guide.

SHLOMO AVINERI's latest work, *The Making of Modern Zionism*,[2] is a useful complement to David Vital's. It makes no attempt to chronicle the fortunes of Zionism or its protagonists, but rather to investigate one at a time the basic ideas contributed to the movement by its own thinkers and some of their predecessors or contemporaries, such as the historian Heinrich Graetz, who helped in the transmutation by which the Jewish self-image became that of a nation. In an introduction, Professor Avineri argues for the view that Zionism was a revolution in Jewish consciousness rather than a continuation of the historic religious link with the promised land. Zionism was not the heritage of the ghetto; it was the result of discovering that when the walls of the ghetto crumbled before the blasts of emancipation, a "Jewish problem" survived. Individuals found it hard to live a Jewish life in such matters as Sabbath-keeping while playing a full part in non-Jewish societies, while even for those individuals for whom personal emancipation was an answer there was nothing to replace the collective life Jews had previously enjoyed. And if this was a problem in the West, it was nothing compared with the post-1881 miseries of the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe.

Professor Avineri's other main contribution is his constant emphasis on the extent to which not only Zionism as such, but each of its multifarious strands, ranging from Ber Borochov's Marxism to Vladimir Jabotinsky's "Integral Nationalism", was an adaptation of currents in the wider European world. In his rather sobering concluding remarks, he sets the somewhat disquieting realities of modern Israeli society against the ideals of the founding fathers, and insists upon the view that Zionism meant more than merely creating a small independent State in the Levant where Jews could be guaranteed against physical persecution. It had also to be somewhere where Jews would not reproduce the characteristics of Diaspora society but would build a more complete national entity based upon a self-sustaining productive economy. This is, of course, the standard view of the Labour movement in Israel and more particularly of its Kibbutz wing. If, as it now appears, this has become a minority view in Israel, the thrust of Professor Avineri's book becomes easier to understand.

[2] *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*. By SHLOMO AVINERI. Weidenfeld, £9.95.

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There is some temptation to rank the precursors according to their gift for seeing into what the future was likely to bring. Neither Herzl nor Jabotinsky lacked blind spots—Herzl in not having a clear idea of the "Jewishness" of the *Judenstaat*, and Jabotinsky in his failure to understand the environment in which ideas of European provenance would have to work themselves out. A failure to see that the same nationalist currents that swept through the Jewish world would also soon sweep through the Arab countries—a resistance, that is, to accepting as a given element in the situation the possibility or actuality of an Arab national revival—has always been a weakness in the Zionist approach; and from mistaken theory comes doubtful practice. What could happen, and has happened under the Begin régime, was both foreseen and warned against by Ahad Ha-Am—a philosopher more clear-sighted than most practical men.

Of the actual leaders of modern Israel, Ben Gurion in his measured pessimism was the most realistic and the most politically gifted. Not only was he realistic in seeing that circumstances had so swiftly made Israel the only refuge for many Jews unable to pursue the ideas of steady preparation that had marked earlier and voluntary immigrant groups; he also understood (as his successors have not always done) the reality of Israel's international predicament, and that it was not just the sympathy of American government but the sympathy of the American people that had to be sustained. Aharon David Gordon insisted that the national home should be "the mother country of world Jewry with the Jewish communities in the Diaspora as its colonies—and not the reverse. . . ." Today this vision has come true, in the sense that Israel is the common factor in Jewish life everywhere; but it is not true in the sense that materially, and to some extent politically, Israel now depends on the Diaspora and not vice versa.

But if history encourages one to believe that the ideas that move great actions will never work out as intended, then the Jews are only an example of a general historical law; and in that sense they have truly become one among the nations—normal in all respects, as Herzl at least would have hoped.

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*Robert Gittings*

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# LETTERS

## Double- (and Triple-) Think

WHY the extraordinary, inexplicable sneer against the International Labour Organisation—"The ILO in Geneva is corrupt in the true Orwellian sense: its very name a lie" (in "Waiting for 1984" in your December 1982 issue)?

I wonder if that view is shared by Lech Walesa when he selected the ILO as the international forum in which to spell out his union's philosophy in June 1981. Or if that view is shared by Polish workers who have heard (thanks to the BBC and Radio Free Europe) of the ILO's condemnations of the Jaruzelski coup.

Certainly the governments of the Soviet Union and Rumania, to name two that have recently been internationally and publicly indicted by the ILO for flouting its Conventions will be surprised to learn that the ILO is "corrupt" and "a lie."

God knows, oppressed workers in Turkey, the Philippines, Chile, whose case rarely gets international attention are pleased that there is one well-implanted international organisation that is ready to hear their complaints and issue rebukes.

Yes, I know that rebukes and condemnations do not add up to very much; but in a world where workers' rights are usually ignored unless championing them coincides with the propaganda needs of Washington or Moscow, some mention at an international forum is better than nothing.

Like all UN agencies the ILO is a bureaucratic monster. But every single anti-union minister whether from capitalist or communist countries will take pleasure from McNamara and O'Keeffe's sneer.

DENIS MACSHANE

*Geneva*

MR MACSHANE'S ASSERTIVENESS immediately arouses the suspicion that he has been hit on a raw nerve. Furthermore it allows him to avoid the central argument that the ILO is indeed *animal naturaliter Orwellianum*.

His eye has slid a little too hastily over the footnote which supports such a charge—the ILO has many members from countries where free trade unions—strikes, etc—are illegal (ENCOUNTER, December 1982, p. 46, note 8). This is not a sneer; it is a lament.

The essence of it is not altered by his insistence that the organisation is in the nature of a forum operating in the present difficult circumstances of the international world. And we do take his point that mere condemnation of countries which openly flout the rules counts for very little in the climate of propaganda exchanges between the great (and smaller) powers.

But let us look a little more closely at the ILO's most recently publicised activities, in particular the threat to invoke Convention 87 against Great Britain if the government proceeds (on the basis of the new Green Paper) to legislate trade union reform in the UK. All that is really at issue is whether union members be allowed to *elect* their executives and general secretaries by *secret ballot*. Secret ballots are surely a peerless democratic priority. Yet the ILO response so far has been a threat of expulsion on the grounds that no government may "interfere" in the free association of union members. Have similar threats been made to the state-controlled unions of the Eastern Bloc countries? The answer is, of course, no.

Mr MacShane's arguments are thus asymmetrical, as are those of all maverick radicals who attach themselves to large organisations without any clear governing principles.

As for the use of *Solidarity* to exhibit a clear conscience, its Polish exiles in London are still anxious about the status of the original delegates, about what has happened to them since—and indeed as to why the ILO has not expelled Poland for "government interference" in the free association of union members. The truth is that it required enormous pressure to make the ILO go even as far as it did towards helping *Solidarity* in 1981; and since then disillusion has set in everywhere.

*Triple-think* is merely *Double-think* forty years on.

JAMES MCNAMARA
DENNIS J. O'KEEFFE

*London*

## Acknowledgments, Parodied

THERE ARE not always such acknowledgments as *M* rightly parodies them (in his column of your September/October issue). Averil Cameron writes on page IX of her *Agathias* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1970):

> "But finally, to my husband I owe a debt rather different from that usually admitted in prefaces by wives to their husbands, or, more often, husbands to their wives. I cannot say that he typed all the manuscript for me. . . ."

WOLFGANG SHULLER

*University of Konstanz*
*Konstanz, W. Germany*

## All the News Fit to Misprint

The following is, quite literally, the text of the first paragraph of the second *Times* leading article of Tuesday, 9 November 1982. Entitled "Both Sides of the Bosphorus", it runs:

> "That being so, surely a period of free debate and canvassing could have been allowed without serious risk without provoking new outbreaks of violence? Surely the former elected leaders, whom the new constitution excludes from political activity for ten years could have been given a chance to speak in their own defence? Surely a more hermetically secret form of ballot could have been used than one involving different coloured ballot papers for Yes and No? Surely it was not necessary to facilitate abuses by"

When the so-called "best newspaper in the world" allows that kind of rubbish to appear in print and when—as Edward Pearce writes in December's ENCOUNTER ("Unfreedom of the Press")—gibberish like that and worse is now the rule, and not the exception, in most pages of the *Times* (and the *Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, *Observer* and *Guardian*) what can the reading public do about it?

Nothing, apparently. Because there is a conspiracy of silence on the part of the papers concerned in this national disgrace. Letters of complaint (as I know from



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personal experience) are not only not published, they are neither answered nor acknowledged. It is quite clearly a taboo subject even in a world in which four-letter words have become *de rigueur*.

But the malaise, it seems to me, goes much deeper than the so-called "misprints." Editorial standards seem to be collapsing, too. Individual examples of this perhaps appear trivial while whole catalogues of sloppy output would be boring and unreadable outside, perhaps, the pages of an academic thesis.

But what does one make, for instance, of a middle-page feature article, very well written, in a recent *Times* on the sensational defeat of Korchnoi by Kasparov, which omits the actual text of the game itself? Or a news item which says that "a Labour M.P." is about to move the writ for the Bermondsey by-election if the party does not do so, but omits, without explanation, the M.P.'s name?

The chaotic performance of the "quality" press (the papers which are flown out each day to the chief cities of the world to give a picture of contemporary Britain) has nothing to do with the new technology. The mistakes appear in papers printed on the antediluvian "hot metal" process and those which have transferred to the modern systems.

Edward Pearce has certainly done a public service in exposing this hushed-up scandal. But, in fact, does anyone care? I never hear it as a subject of conversation, least of all among journalists. Is this merely just a rather striking example of our steady transformation into a banana republic?

KENNETH BROWN

*Stockport*

# In Defence of "Palestine"

## *By Antony T. Sullivan*

COMMENTARIES on the Palestinian problem by Irving Kristol and Louis Jourdain (ENCOUNTER, September-October, December 1982) suffer from similar misperceptions of reality. Today, the issue for Palestinians—and for most of the world—is not one of refugees but of peoplehood, and of the consequent "right" of Palestinians to national self-determination on a portion of their ancestral lands. Remarkably, Palestinians have succeeded in the short space of 15 or 20 years in transforming themselves from individual refugees into a nation in exile. Now, can one deny that the Palestinian case for self-determination is as morally exigent and unarguable as is the Israeli one? This "plain truth", apparently still so difficult for many in the West to grasp, will increasingly shape the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the years ahead.

Thus, it makes little sense to dispute whether UNRWA rolls are padded, or how many Palestinians are located in particular Arab countries. Whatever their personal status, geographic location or economic situation, almost all of the four million Palestinians now consider themselves to belong to an exiled people, and believe their national home to lie within the boundaries of historic Palestine. In practice, a majority has come to accept the inevitability of a state consisting only of East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank. Tragically, the frenetic colonisation of the Occupied Territories by the Begin government is making a reasonable settlement on this basis increasingly difficult.

For the record, several corrections must be made. First, it is inaccurate to affirm that the Arab world has extended to Palestinians no "substantial offers of citizenship." On the contrary, Palestinians have been full citizens of Jordan for three decades and more. Nevertheless, other Arab nations have indeed not granted them citizenship, but primarily for reasons of banal self-interest rather than any desire to maintain a "festering sore" on Israel's flanks.[1] Historically, any grant of citizenship to mainly Muslim Palestinians would have upset Lebanon's delicate political confessionalism, required the conservative Arabian peninsular states to alter traditional security policies which discourage the granting of citizenship to significant numbers of foreigners of any sort, and confronted Egypt with apparent new social and political problems, given its rate of population growth and chronic economic crisis. During most of the period since 1948, no Arab state has had both the political stability and economic flexibility necessary to make the integration of Palestinians other than an onerous and probably dangerous task.

Most importantly, Palestinians themselves have frequently resisted citizenship and permanent settlement in their host countries, fearing that acceptance would constitute renunciation of their right either to return or be granted compensation, as originally called for in UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (Sec. III) adopted in December 1948 and consistently supported by the major Western powers ever since. At the same time, at least two-thirds of all Palestinians displaced (hardly a "small part") *have* gone on to create successful lives for themselves, outside the refugee camps and often against great odds, in societies around the globe. To suggest that it is Yassir Arafat and the PLO who keep refugees "locked into the abject life of their camps" is simply not to discuss the issue seriously.

It is distressing at this late date to see resurrected the hoary canard that Palestinians evacuated their homes in 1948 on appeals or orders from Arab leaders. This charge is totally inaccurate. For an excellent discussion of the entire question, see Erskine Childers' article, "The Other Exodus" (*Spectator*, London, 12 May 1961) and the extensive correspondence in the *Spectator* which followed. Suffice it to say here that *no* such entreaties or

[1] More often than not, desperate Palestinians have proven an embarrassment to the host régimes, given the scale and harshness of Israeli retaliation against Palestinian infiltration or subversion. No régime (Jordan possibly excepted) has ever been able to move vigorously or consistently against the Palestinians because of the Arab masses' firm belief in the rectitude of the Palestinian cause.

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commands *ever* came from Arab leaders. Rather, official Arab radio broadcasts repeatedly warned Palestinians not to move or abandon their lands.[2] Recordings of all radio transmissions in and around Palestine in 1948 by the BBC and CIA are deposited, respectively, in the British Museum and at Princeton University, and may be examined by anyone interested. In March 1948, the Palestinian leadership went so far as to send letters to all neighbouring Arab countries opposing the admission of any Palestinians misguided enough to flee. That these facts evidently continue largely unknown in the West constitutes one of the salient puzzles of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

[2] For example: Damascus Radio, 4 April 1948, 2050 hours; Shar al-Adna, 4 April 1948; Al-Inqaz Radio, 24 April 1948, 1200 hours; 25 April 1948, Jerusalem; 4 May 1948, 1900 hours, Beirut; 15 May 1948, Jerusalem. On this subject note also James E. Akins, "The Flawed Rationale for Israel's Invasion of Lebanon", *American-Arab Affairs*, Fall 1982.

Techniques employed to remove the Palestinian population included psychological warfare (as in Plan Dalet which was implemented to "cleanse" the Galilee), the use of rolling barrel-bombs and dynamite to cause panic in crowded civilian quarters, and the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians such as occurred with the entry of Moshe Dayan's jeep commando column into Lydda on 11 July 1948. Whatever Haled Al Azm may recently have chosen to say, or the *Jerusalem Post* to attribute to him, the sad, "plain truth" is as stated above.

Common geostrategic interests of the Western alliance demand termination of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. This cannot be accomplished except through a guarantee of Israeli security within the boundaries of 1967, and recognition of Palestinian self-determination in the 23% of Palestine which remains. To that end, a correct understanding of the background and current nature of this Semitic tragedy is essential.

ANTHONY T. SULLIVAN

*Ann Arbor, Michigan*

## *On the "French Character"*

*Paris*

**"WHAT is happening to France and to the French? . . ." The Swiss, not least among the European neighbours, have been increasingly upset by what their correspondents in Paris report of the new sense of "insecurity . . . disquiet . . . distemper."**

*In an interview with the* Weltwoche *of Zurich, Jean François-Poncet—the son of the famous French diplomat, himself a Foreign Minister in Giscard's cabinet (although he tries to keep free from party politics)—voiced his worry about the rising tide of French "protectionism" which may subvert the European Common Market, minimised the danger of more and more Communists getting into high governmental places ("we know where they are, who they are, and what they're up to"), and emphasised the mounting discontent of the Left trade-unions with Mitterrand's socialist economics. He considered the present Government's difficulties to be the product of Ideology aggravated by Inexperience. The interviewer, evidently no admirer of "the French character", suggested an alternative explanation; and he quoted from the Austrian historian, Egon Friedell, who in his* Cultural History of Europe *had remarked:*

**"The two extremes between which France and French affairs can be seen to oscillate are: Pedantry and Folly. The pedantic and the foolish elements in a temperament are not contradictory but are only varying degrees of the same relationship to reality. And what would happen when the pedantry comes into conflict with reality and is forced somehow to come to grips with it? Will the pedantry go on to try to adjust its twisted view of the world and correct it according to outside pressures? Never. Faced with the choice, a national pedantry would much prefer to go on twisting reality. . . ."**

JEAN FRANÇOIS-PONCET: *You could hardly expect me to agree with such a sharp and even insulting formula, and especially when it is supposed to be not only relevant to the socialist experiment of the last 18 months but also to our French mentality in general. The trouble with our French socialists is not their "pedantry" but their ignorance and their demagogy. And these are vices which are to be found in the national politics of every people: they are surely not a French monopoly.*

*One also has to add that the French socialists have not tried to deny the errors with which they began their "experiment", and have accordingly changed them drastically. They began by trying to fight against unemployment by stimulating consumer demand; these days they are attempting to struggle against the unfavourable balance of trade by a policy of reducing living standards. So one cannot really accuse them of being stubbornly unrealistic.*

*But the general framework of their ideas and policies remains the same, and it is this "socialism" which is out of touch. Nothing could be further from the individualistic French temperament than Collectivism, with its* dirigisme *and* étatisme*; and it is this that is being superimposed. Such a policy is doomed to failure.*

*If you want self-criticism from the French, I am willing to go along; but we are not masochists.*

DIE WELTWOCHE *(Zurich)*

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## In Cameroon

JOHN WAIN's report on his foray into the heart of darkness ("At Sea on the River of Prawns", ENCOUNTER, November 1982) will not charm Africans—in this case, certainly, meaning "people who have gone outside Africa for their education" and, one must add, perforce stayed outside. If they ever read it: which is unlikely, since the surviving opponents of the Ahidjo régime are francophone, exiled in France. Among them is the outstanding French African novelist, Mongo Beti (who has little English) and it seems probable that Mr Wain, though he sought "a general briefing on recent Cameroonian history", has never heard of him. Apparently the typical cultural diversions he warmed to excluded writers—if any deserving of the name, apart from government hacks, remain alive or free in Cameroon.

Beti would, I think, identify Mr Wain as one of "the new colonials" whose general ignorance of the gravity of the human rights situation in French West Africa stems from a deep-seated, perhaps subconscious wish *not* to know—a wish doubtless urbanely nurtured by both French and English diplomats whose job it is to help keep countries like Cameroon "stable" that the new economic imperialism (or "cooperation") may flourish. Mr Beti spoke passionately last October, at the Toronto "Writers and Human Rights" Congress (in aid of Amnesty International), of how, in countries like Gabon, Togo, the Central African Republic, Zaire and his own, there is *de facto* control by the great foreign powers, who abet dictators (as on the American continent, where such unholy alliances have received more exposure). In Cameroon political prisoners have been held without trial since 1961, unless they have been "publicly executed." Here is the truth of Mr Beti's incisive observation that Westerners are conditioned to accept an Ahidjo régime as the African norm and, while gnawing their chicken bones, accord them a superior indulgence. Western prejudices, he said at Toronto, "permit some doubt" (cf. Mr Wain: "the rights and wrongs of the matter are beyond me"—would he say the same of Russian dissidence?) whether Africans have inherent rights; Africans have "rights to lesser liberties." Just conceivably Ahidjo's "security", which Mr Wain thinks "not a bad sign", bears out rather Mr Beti's contention that internal opposition has been effectively crushed.

MICHAEL THORPE

*Mount Allison University*
*New Brunswick*
*Canada*

YES, MY ARTICLE on a visit to Cameroon was pitifully inadequate as an account of the political, social and historical situation of that country—as I kept on saying in the article itself, over and over again, to the point of wearisomeness. There are enough "experts" drawing fat salaries for knowing about Africa. The value of my piece, if any, was exactly that it was the view of a babe in the wood, someone who had *not* spent years studying these problems, had *not* weighed all the evidence, just went there and looked around him.

From what position of superior enlightenment Mr Thorpe himself pronounces is not clear. Since he writes from a University, he may be one of the aforesaid experts, but all he actually claims is that he went along to a meeting in his home town at which Mongo Beti (yes, I have heard of him, thank you) made a rousing speech about the suppression of political opposition in Cameroon. I don't for a moment disbelieve Beti's case, nor doubt Mr Thorpe's sincere concern; at the same time we all know that virtually every African state is attacked by its political opposition in exile, and that said opposition usually consists of the party who grabbed for power, missed it by an inch, and are prepared to spend the rest of their lives airing that grievance.

I remarked that the security arrangements at President Ahidjo's palace seemed rather easy-going. Mr Thorpe retorts that this only shows how thoroughly the opposition has been trodden down. Well, every argument can be used both ways. If we had all been searched for twenty minutes before being allowed in, that would have been a sign of tyranny too. Ahmadou Ahidjo seemed very secure and confident when I was there; what am I to make of the fact that, in the brief time since I returned, he has resigned and handed over power to others? Does that make him worse or better?

I would like to know more about the history and politics of West Africa, as I would like to know more about many things. But my energy is not unlimited, and, like just about everyone on earth, I have priorities. When I remark of the internal security situation in Cameroon that "the rights and wrongs of it are beyond me", Mr Thorpe asks whether I would say the same about the Soviet treatment of dissidents. Well, no. However disgraceful the admission, I tend to be more vigilant about things that concern me and mine personally. The government of Cameroon may be repressive, but it has not been trying hard for 60 years to export its repressiveness to my own country and make me live under it.

JOHN WAIN

*Oxford*

## Kedourie's "Equality"

IN discussing the question "Is Neo-Conservatism Viable?" [ENCOUNTER November, 1982], Professor Elie Kedourie presents his subjects as maintaining that "there is no way of establishing that equality is more just . . . than inequality."

This is, though important, an unnecessarily modest contention. For the word "justice" hs been traditionally (and, until only yesterday, uncontentiously) defined in terms of the getting and keeping of our several, and presumably often quite different and unequal, deserts and entitlements. (It is one of the many remarkable omissions from that monster volume *A Theory of Justice* that John Rawls nowhere finds space to quote *honeste vivere, neminem laedere, suum cuique tribuere.*) The dispute has been not about the essential nature of justice—but about what people's individual deserts and entitlements actually and properly are.

So if it is to be shown, and not merely assumed, that equality of condition is the mandate of justice, then someone has got to try to make out that everyone's deserts and entitlements are, either necessarily or else as a matter of happenstance, the same and equal. Yet who has even attempted so unpromising a project? Certainly not Rawls himself, who appears to reject the whole notion of desert, and who takes no cognisance of any entitlements not grounded in desert.

The Procrustean aficionados of social justice—construed always as requiring an ever greater equality of

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condition—should, therefore, in honesty surrender the propaganda appeal of the word "justice." Having first attempted to meet an Austinian challenge to explain what other sorts the insertion of the adjective "social" is intended to exclude, they should proceed to repudiate the whole notion of justice. It is (they ought to say) backward-looking, antique, reactionary and gothic. Such progressives must then try to persuade the rest of us to accept their own utterly different and essentially forward-looking ideal. For their proposal is that the Procrustean state should, regardless of what anyone has been and is or has or has not done, make the condition of everyone—or perhaps of everyone but the equalisers—as near as can be equal. And that must be altogether irrespective of all antecedent deserts or entitlements; irrespective, that is, of the claims of justice.

ANTONY FLEW

*University of Reading*

## "Syphilitic Shock"

AS A DOCTOR I cannot let pass an error of fact in Stanislav Andreski's article "The Syphilitic Shock" in the May issue of ENCOUNTER. He states that, in 1917, J. Wagner-Jauregg began to treat patients by infecting them with malaria, and until the discovery of penicillin it was the only effective cure for syphilis. Naturally-acquired malaria has the same effect.

The true facts are as follows. The then (1917) existing treatment of syphilis had no effect on General Paralysis of the Insane *(GPI)*, one of the late manifestations of syphilis. These patients usually ended their days in lunatic asylums where outbreaks of infectious diseases (such as typhoid, typhus, cholera, etc.) were not uncommon with high mortality. Wagner-Jauregg who was Professor of Psychiatry in Vienna noted that patients in the asylum suffering from *GPI* who got infected but survived seemed to show marked improvement of their mental condition. He came to the correct conclusion that the only common features of these different infectious diseases was high fever. Therefore, one ought to infect these patients with an infectious disease to cause high temperature (other methods at that time were unknown). Obviously this would be dangerous and out of question, as there was no treatment for any infectious disease except malaria for which quinine was the accepted and very effective remedy. And that Wagner-Jauregg did with startling success, earning for himself well-deserved fame and a Nobel prize.

To repeat, malaria treatment was for *GPI* and not for any other manifestations of syphilis.

E. HACKER

*London*

## Hannah Arendt's Connection

MAURICE CRANSTON'S essay on Hannah Arendt (ENCOUNTER, December 1982) is marred by a number of errors that are crammed into one sentence. He writes:

> "[Arendt] joined the faculty of the New School of Social Research in New York, ironically an offshoot of the Frankfurt Institute brought to America by her old enemy T. W. Adorno."

The New School was formed in 1919, principally as a haven for iconoclastic scholars, such as Charles A. Beard (the historian) and Thorstein Veblen (the economist) and joined by the philosopher Horace M. Kallen and the historian James Harvey Robinson, to give courses free of the usual academic disciplines. In 1933, the President of the New School, Alvin Johnson (who also was the editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*) created a "University in Exile" for European scholars, and these included Emil Lederer, Kurt Riezler, Leo Strauss, Max Wertheimer, Max Ascoli, Adolph Lowe, Frieda Wunderlich and other distinguished men and women, but none of the Frankfurt Institute. Many years later, this "University in Exile", became the Graduate Faculty of the New School, and it was *this* body that Hannah Arendt joined in 1970.

The Frankfurt Institute came to Columbia University (as a loose affiliate) in May 1934. The Institute was then, as almost entirely during its operation, run by Max Horkheimer, with T. W. Adorno arriving later to work as a

## *"Cultural Ecology"*

SIR—*I am mildly shocked at the intemperate language with which (December 25th) your correspondent referred to the very well-documented thesis published in* ENCOUNTER *about the outlandish media coverage of the Lebanon war: namely, "the familiar reaction of 'I don't like it, so it can't be true, and shoot the messenger' . . ."*

*Unlike your counter-statement, our argument was buttressed by a close analysis of hundreds of Anglo-American dispatches, columns, editorials, broadcasts and television documentaries. Our concern was with an objective critique of the mass media and how the Israelis, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Lebanese were reported.*

*Both Professor Edward Alexander and I were appalled by the deceptions, distortions, and disinformation. The reporters and editors involved—from The Times of London to the Washington Post—failed (by and large) quite miserably to give the news with some objectivity and thoughtfulness.*

*I have never witnessed quite such an extraordinary exercise in bias; not even when the New York Times correspondents in Moscow were reporting how happy all the Russians were under Stalin, nor when Fleet Street warned us day after day during the first postwar years how the old Nazis were about to retake power in occupied Germany. For all the vaunted achievements of our free western press, its record in certain key conflicts has not been very good. The accounts it offered of the Lebanese tragedy of 1982 often touched the nadir of twentieth-century journalistic misdemeanours.*

*The foreign policy and military tactics of the Israelis or anybody else are not sacred cows. But, as we demonstrated in the documentation your writer calls "hokum", the most elementary standards of fairness and caution in reporting complex and fast-breaking events went by the board.*

*It is regrettable that The Economist, usually so alert to the foibles of the mass media, should have turned its back on that most vital task of "cultural ecology": namely, the prevention of the pollution of public opinion.*

*Melvin J. Lasky*
in THE ECONOMIST
(*London*)

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collaborator of Horkheimer. The affiliation with Columbia was paved by the shadowy figure of Julian Gomperz, and this story is told by Lewis Feuer in the issue of *Survey* (London) Summer, 1980, Vol. 25, No. 3.

M. J. DEBELIUS

*Cambridge, Mass.*

## Pearce's Falklands

IN your June-July issue, Edward Pearce writes that at the invasion of the Falklands, Mrs Thatcher was furious, and "more to the point, almost everybody else was furious, to the point where anything less than an immediate launch of an Armada, towards a place few people could have found on the world map the day before, would have prevented an immediate Government crisis."

Over here, we had the impression that *nothing* less than an immediate launch would have prevented a government crisis. Pity Mr Pearce wasn't advising Mrs Thatcher: *anything* would have been much cheaper for you.

JOHN RUSSIANO MILES

*Malibu*
*California*

## The Devil's Tunes

I ENJOYED Frank Barber's "Thoughts on a Tune" (ENCOUNTER, November 1982). But I would like to state that if "the Rev. Rowland Hill used to say: *Why should the devil have all the good tunes?*", he was quoting Martin Luther (*cf.* Albert Schweitzer, *J. S. Bach*, Chapter III).

KONRAD WOLFF

*New York City*

# AUTHORS

**Russell Hoban**'s novels for adults (he is also a well-known writer for children) include *Kleinzeit* (1974), *Turtle Diary* (1975) and *Riddley Walker* (1980); *Pilgermann* will be published by Summit in the US, and in England on 10 March by Jonathan Cape.

**Laurence Martin**'s article is based on a lecture delivered to the Centre for Naval War Studies and published in the *Naval War College Review*, to whose editor we are grateful for permission to the author to adapt and expand his text.

**Roger Scruton** is Reader in Philosophy at Birkbeck College, London, and co-editor of a newly established journal, *The Salisbury Review*. His most recent books are *The Politics of Culture* (Carcanet Press) and *A Dictionary of Political Thought* (Macmillan).

**Edward Pearce** is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London. His profiles of House of Commons personalities, *The Senate of Lilliput*, will be published by Faber later this year.

**Alain Touraine** is a French sociologist on the faculty of the Collège de France. Among his books are *Post-Industrial Society* (Wildwood House, 1974) and *The Voice and the Eye: Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge University Press, 1981).

**Elie Kedourie** is Professor of Politics at the London School of Economics and editor of *Middle Eastern Studies*. His publications include *Nationalism* (1960), *Arabic Political Memoirs* (1974), and *Islam in the Modern World* (Mansell, 1980); he is co-editor of *Palestine and Israel in the 19th and 20th Century* and *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel* (Frank Cass, 1982).

**Bohdan Nahaylo**, a former USSR researcher for Amnesty International, is a writer and journalist specialising in Soviet affairs. He is a regular contributor to *The Spectator*, and is currently working on a study of Soviet dissenters. *Ukrainians and Georgians*, of which he is co-author, was published last year by the Minority Rights Group.

**Douglas Johnson** is Professor of French History at University College, London. Among his books are *A Concise History of France* (1970) and *French Society and the Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 1976). He is co-editor of *Britain and France: Ten Centuries* (William Dawson, 1980), and is currently working on a study of the French Army from Dreyfus to de Gaulle.

**Philip Towle** is Deputy Director of the Centre for International Studies, Cambridge University, and a Fellow of Queens' College. His most recent publications are *Arms Control and East-West Relations*, which Croom Helm are to publish later this year, and (as co-author) *Protest and Perish: A Critique of Unilateralism* (Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1982).

**David Donnison**, Professor of Town and Regional Planning, University of Glasgow, was Professor of Social Administration at the London School of Economics from 1961-69, and then Director of its Centre for Environmental Studies. From 1975-80 he was Chairman of the Supplementary Benefits Commission. Among his books are *The Government of Housing* (1967), *An Approach to Social Policy* (1975), and *The Politics of Poverty* (Martin Robertson, 1982); he is co-author of *The Good City* (Heinemann, 1980) and *Housing Policy* (Penguin, 1982).

**Leonard Schapiro**, Professor of Political Science with special reference to Russian Studies at the London School of Economics from 1963-75, is the author of numerous books, including *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy* (2nd ed., Macmillan, 1976), *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (2nd ed., Methuen, 1970), *The Government and Politics of the Soviet Union* (6th ed., Hutchinson, 1978), and *Totalitarianism* (Macmillan, 1972). His most recent publication is a biography of Turgenev (Oxford University Press, 1979).

**Max Beloff** was Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, from 1957-74, and Principal of the University College at Buckingham, 1974-79; he was created a life peer in 1981. His most recent book (as co-author) is *The Government of the United Kingdom* (Weidenfeld, 1980).

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ENCOUNTER acknowledges financial assistance from, among other generous donors, the Arts Council of Great Britain.

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# *Life & Letters Today*

*Washington D.C.*

DICTIONARIES: *The White House speech writers are getting tetchy because it's been pointed out that they goofed at Windsor Castle when they had the President say that King John went off to Runnymede to "sign" the Magna Carta. As all the best speech writers know, no King before Edward III could write anything.*

*In their defence at the White House they've been quoting Webster's Dictionary which gives "sign" as a synonym for "seal attaching," adding: "But, of course the English may not accept Webster's dictionary—it's American". Huffy, huffy.*

DAILY MAIL

*Washington D.C.*

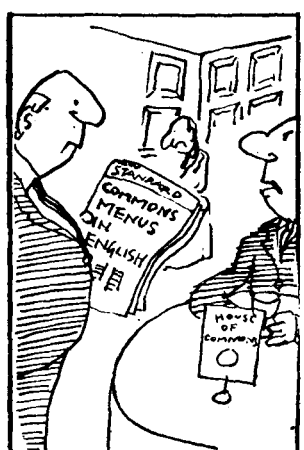
BRITISHISM: *At a briefing in the White House Roosevelt Room before the trip, a passel of pundits was treated to the inside lingo of the National Security Council.*

*"In the run-up to this Eureka speech . . ." began Gen. McFarlane, talking about the preparations for President Reagan's address to his college. At that point, the pundit sitting next to me jotted down a note: "Run-up?"*

*Assiduous research [William Safire writes] shows this to be a Britishism. In cricket, a player gains momentum before bowling the ball by running up to the point of releasing it; in British politics, a period before voting is called the run-up to election.*

NEW YORK TIMES

*London*




MICHAEL HEATH
*"Quite right! Nobody could accuse the food of being French."* (DAILY MAIL)

TABLE D'HÔTE: **Everything should now be as clear as soup for MPS and others who eat in one of the eight dining rooms at the Commons.**

**No longer will they have to cope with "*potages*" and "*consommes*." Nor will those who failed O-level French have to pluck up courage to ask a supercilious waiter to interpret such mysteries as "*gigot d'agneau*", "*pommes persillees*" and "*epinards au beurre*."**

**The decision that menus should in future be written in Queen's English was taken by the chairman of the Commons catering committee, after talks with Mr John Smillie, head of Commons catering. Mr Smillie said yesterday:**

**"I've never liked the words 'French Fried', now they are going to be called chips, and we will have roast and creamed potatoes as well. I know that French is the international language in the kitchen but this is the British Parliament, and so we are now going to have British menus which all can understand."**

**So from now on menus will be printed exclusively in plain, honest-to-goodness English. "*Pommes frites*" are out. Chips are in. "*Boutons de Bruxelles*" become sprouts, "*Consommé Windsor, Paillettes Dorées*" will be just oxtail soup with cheese straws. And so on, through the "*Caneton Rôti Sevillane*", the "*Contre-filet de Boeuf Rôti a l'anglaise*", the "*Bombe Pralinée aux Pêches*" etc., etc.**

**Tory MP Charles Irving, chairman of the Commons catering committee, explained last night:**

**"There is no fun wondering what it is you are about to eat. If it's blooming potato soup, why not say so?"**

**So will the price of the MPs' food come down with the less exotically-styled menus?**

**"Don't be absurd!" snapped Mr Irving. "The price should go up because now they can read the menu properly."**

DAILY TELEGRAPH/DAILY MAIL

*London*

SCOOP: **Yesterday's *Daily Mirror* had an item headed:** MI5 SPY CENTRE IS FOUND. **It claimed that yesterday's *New Statesman* would reveal that the basement of Clarewood Court, Marylebone, was a surveillance centre housing teams of MI5 "watchers."**

**Alas, the *New Statesman* did not have a word about it. The magazine's report, prepared by Duncan Campbell, had been pulled out when it was found that the story was not new and that the garage beneath Clarewood Court was—well, a garage.**

THE TIMES

*Houston*

RAZZAMATAZZ: *Texas House Speaker Bill Clayton said state Rep. Bill Heatly, (D-Paducah) should not have used such strong language while razzing another member with a presentation earlier this week. "I thought it was a disgrace to the House," Clayton said.*

*Heatly presented to State Rep. Bob Davis (R-Irving) Wednesday a bottle of what he called "Red-Salve" because of what he said was Davis' tendency to get red in the face and neck during debate.*

*With almost a full gallery, including a group of third-grade students, Heatly read the application instructions on the label. The last instruction called for Davis to put the bottle of ointment in a certain part of his anatomy. Heatly used specific language describing the anatomy, including the place he said Davis could shove the bottle of ointment.*

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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